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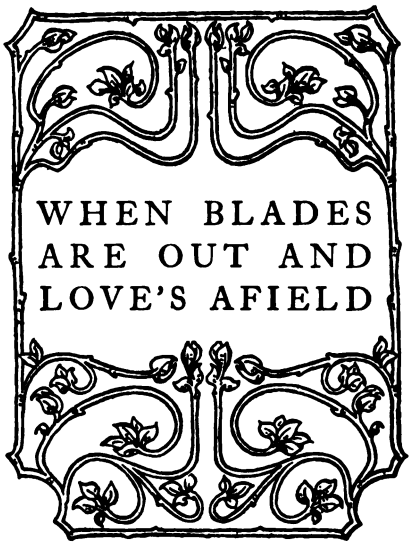
When Blades Are Out & Love's Afield

By Cyrus Townsend Brady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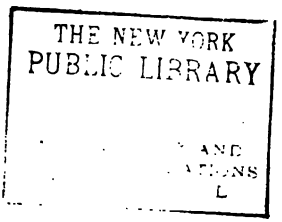
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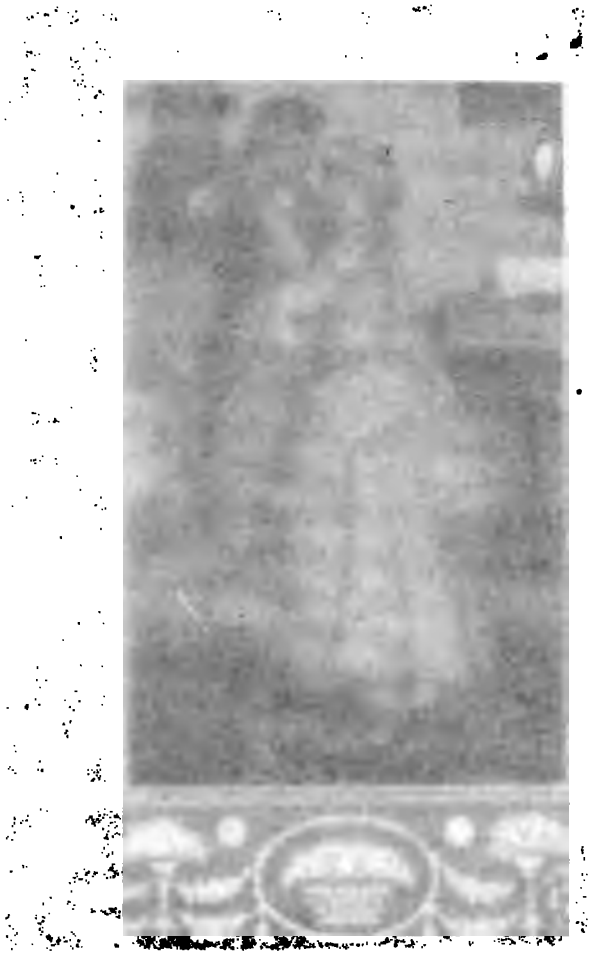

WHEN BLADES ARE OUT AND LOVE'S AFIELD

A COMEDY OF CROSS-PURPOSES IN THE CAROLINAS

BY

Cyrus Townsend Brady

With Illustrations by
E. PLAISTED ABBOTT

And Decorations by
EDWARD STRATTON HOLLOWAY

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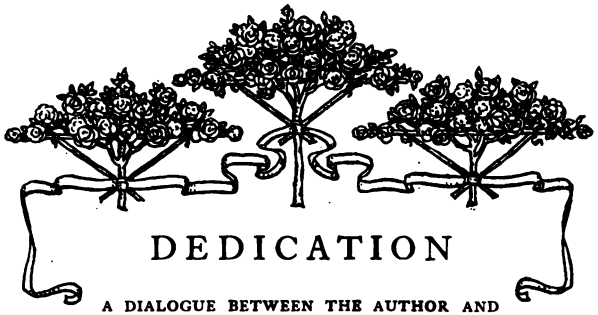

DEDICATION

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE AUTHOR AND A LADY

The Lady. Do you draw your heroines from real life, sir?

The Author. Sometimes, not always. You see I only know one heroine in real life.

The Lady. And she is?

The Author. My wife!

The Lady. Did she prove her heroism by marrying you?

The Author. By living with me after she had done so, Madam!

With an ever-increasing sense of her persistent heroism,
therefore, the author gratefully inscribes
this little book to his wife,

MARY BARRETT BRADY

WOR 19FEB'36

"In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love."

Lay of the Last Minstrel. SCOTT

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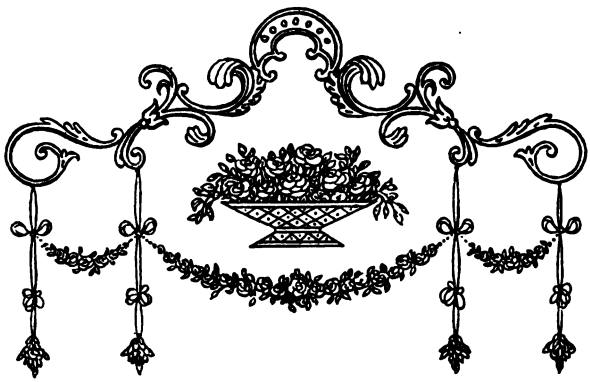

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS romance of love and war is written to amuse. But if the gentle reader should be thereby stimulated to inquire more closely into the character and career of General Nathanael Greene, the author is sure that the search would be richly rewarded by the knowledge gained of the great Rhode Islander.

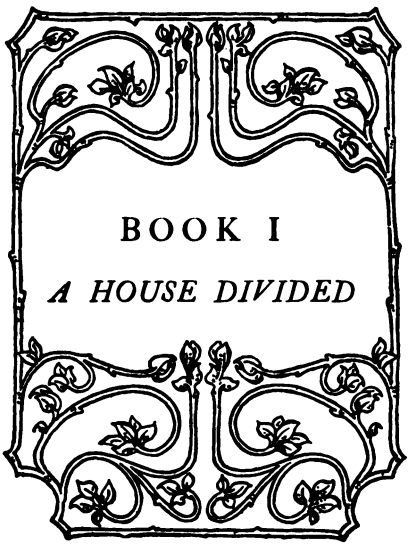
Next to Washington, this "New England Blacksmith," who so highly educated himself that, for relaxation, he read the Latin Poets in the original by the light of the camp-fire, stands as the most brilliant soldier—strategist, tactician, and fighter—of the Revolution. Indeed, he takes no

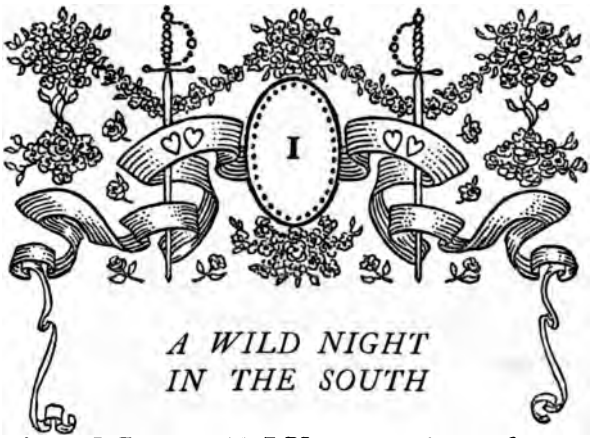
mean place in the long roll of those who have, since and before his day, "set a squadron in the field," in the United States, or in the world even.

And his character was as great as his genius!

C. T. B.

OVERBROOK, PENNSYLVANIA
October, 1900


BOOK I
A HOUSE DIVIDED



A WILD NIGHT IN THE SOUTH

EARLY on the night of the first of February in the year 1781 a lonely horseman, the hope of the South, nay, of the new nation struggling into existence in the labor-pains of the Revolution, sat his weary steed on one of the highways of North Carolina, anxiously awaiting news. The horse was tired to death. As he stood with drooping head under the trees by the side of the road, he trembled with cold and fatigue.

His rider, drenched to the bone by the cold, beating rain in spite of the long military coat wrapped about him, was no less weary. Man and beast were splashed with the mud and road-stains of the long, hard ride they had just finished.

The wild night and the unsettled state of a country, alternately in the possession of opposing armies and subjected to ruthless raids of irrepressible partisans, kept those who had no business abroad safely within-doors; consequently, when the slow, splashing plod of a horse's feet in the sodden road became audible above the noise of the tempest, the waiting horseman forced his jaded steed out from the shelter of the trees and, loosening his sword in its scabbard, cautiously turned toward the approaching rider, giving at the same time a low whistle, which was promptly answered by two similar ones. Greatly relieved, the watcher turned his horse into the road and

the two men met. The latest comer reined in his horse abruptly when he saw the first, and, lifting his hand to his wet helmet, queried, softly,—

"General?"

"Yes, 'tis I, Mr. Grey. What news?"

"Bad, sir," answered the officer, briefly. "Stewart has crossed at Beatty's Ford, attacked and dispersed the militia detachment on guard there, after killing the commander, General Davidson. Cornwallis is over the Catawba in hot pursuit of Huger——"

"Poor Davidson! He died as he would have preferred, in defence of his country. Has anything been heard of Morgan?"

"Nothing yet, sir."

"I would to Heaven I could get some word from him!" continued the other, in great anxiety. "If I could join his forces with those of Huger again, I think we could show his Lordship a clean pair of

heels until the time comes to strike. Pray God it may come quickly!" he added, with repressed vehemence.

"Amen, sir," assented the younger officer, with the heartiness of youth to whom fighting was natural as breathing.

"I must get word to Morgan of this last bad tidings somehow, and I have not a single staff-officer left to send. I have used them up in messages in every direction, trying to rouse the militia."

"Send me, sir," promptly volunteered the young man before him. "I have only ridden a few miles; my mare's got lots left in her yet. I will go back into Salisbury and follow the road southwest from there. Perhaps I can learn something."

"A brave offer, my friend," remarked the General, gratefully, extending his hand, "and I accept it. Go, and may God go with you! Find Morgan. Warn him that Cornwallis is over the Catawba. Tell

him for God's sake to push on to the north with all speed! This is supposing that he has not met Tarleton, or by any chance has defeated him. Tell him to meet us at Guilford Court-House if possible. I will order that the march of the other detachment be delayed as much as is prudent until he join us."

"Very good, sir," replied the subaltern, turning away.

"And get word to me of anything you learn at the earliest possible moment. By the way, is there not some farm-house or plantation near by where I can pass the night? This is your country, I believe. Do you know any one who——"

"There is Judge Burton's seat, which lies about two miles down the road toward Salisbury, sir. You will easily recognize it. It is a great old place built of logs, on a high hill, with the beginnings of a stockade around it. It lies about a half-mile to

the right of the road after you cross the river. You can't mistake the way, sir."

"I shall find it, never fear," said the older man.

"'Tis called 'Overbrook,' sir," continued the younger man. "Well, sir, good-by." He saluted with precision and wheeled his horse sharply.

"Good-by," returned the General, and waiting until the young horseman had disappeared in the darkness, "God grant he get the word to Morgan in time!" he murmured, half in prayer.

Presently, as the sound of the gallop was lost in the noise of the storm, he shook the reins over the neck of his own horse and plodded slowly down the road, a prey to anxiety so great that he lost sight of everything about him.

Cornwallis with a small but well-appointed army had completely overrun the Carolinas. He had defeated Gates with

frightful loss at Camden the year before, and the General, who had been called from successful campaigning with Washington in Northern fields, found himself confronted by a tremendous problem. With an army too insignificant in numbers and too poor in material successfully to cope with that of Cornwallis, yet confronted with a situation which demanded action, he had taken the dangerous risk of dividing his force, and had sent the flower of his command far to the westward under stout old Daniel Morgan to threaten the British communications, in the hope that Cornwallis would delay his advance, or divide his forces, or retreat. A month had passed without tidings of this force,—a month of harrowing anxiety filled with appalling rumors of disaster.

Meanwhile, Cornwallis, who had also divided his army to meet the two American detachments and delayed his approach for a time, had at last assumed the offensive

again. That day he had forced the passage of the Catawba River, dispersed the militia guard with considerable loss, and was now pursuing the main body of the American army under Huger. The American commander himself had ridden down toward Salisbury attended by a meagre staff, the different members of which had been despatched upon various pressing errands, in the hope that he might obtain information about Morgan's detachment. Whatever had been Morgan's course, if his detachment were still in existence, it was imperative that a junction be effected between it and the main body, else the cause of the South would be lost. Sure, black care rode behind the horseman that wretched night, and in his preoccupation he almost forgot his destination. It was not until the hoofs of the horse rang hollow on the planks of the wooden bridge across the river that he recalled his intention.

Turning to the right, he rode for a short distance until he came to a hill, which he slowly ascended. The top was surrounded by a half-completed stockade; fortunately he found the gate had been left open. He rode through the opening and drew rein before the porch of the house which the palisade enclosed, a large, low, rambling two-story building, which appeared to be built of logs. Lights were streaming out into the night through cracks in the shutters. Dismounting and leaving his horse, which was in no mood for unnecessary activity, he strode across the porch and knocked with the hilt of his sword against the door. As he stepped forward he heard the sound of conversation and laughter, which ceased suddenly as he knocked.

"How can people laugh," he thought, wearily, as he waited for a reply, "when their country is in such a plight?"

"Who knocks?" cried an old and im-

perious voice on the other side of the door.

"A soldier."

"What sort of a soldier?"

"An American officer, a Continental, seeking shelter from the storm."

"We keep no——" began the man inside, when he was interrupted by a sweeter, sex-betraying voice, which exclaimed,—

"Father, is this your hospitality? Open the door!"

"My thanks to you, madam," cried the officer outside; "I pledge you my word I come on peaceful errand, and only seek shelter for my tired horse and myself for the night."

As he spoke the door was unbarred and opened, and the brilliant light from a warm, cheerful room streamed out around him.

A tall old man was standing in the doorway and by his side a young woman. As the light fell upon the person of the trav-

"I grieve to trespass on your hospitality"

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eller the old man started back with a frown, exclaiming, in surprise,—

"General Greene! You here, and alone, sir?"

"Yes, sir," answered the General, gravely, stepping forward, "tired, hungry, alone, and penniless."

"Enter, sir, you are welcome," said the young woman, graciously. "My father belongs to the other side, but I—— We would refuse shelter to no one on such a night as this."

"I grieve to trespass upon your hospitality under such circumstances," said General Greene, stepping within the door and standing with the water dripping from his long cloak and forming little pools on the floor; but by this time the old Tory had recovered himself, and with cold and stately courtesy he bade the General enter, at the same time directing one of the slaves to take his horse to the stable.

As the door closed behind them the General found himself in a large, low room, which extended clear through the house. Upon one side a broad flight of steps led to an upper story, and on the other a bright fire was blazing and crackling in a huge open fireplace. The floor was covered with bear-skin rugs and cases of books mingled with stands of arms, while swords and trophies of the chase adorned the walls. On one side of this living-hall was the drawing-room, furnished with all the elegance of that day, and on the other side the dining-room. Through the doorway a massive sideboard was seen covered with gleaming glass and shining plate, and a well-stocked buffet bespoke the wealth of the owner, as the books indicated his culture and the weapons his courage.

In the room, besides the master and his daughter Isabel, two other people were standing, one a younger and smaller girl,

the niece of the Judge, and the other a tall, handsome, distinguished-looking man, who had hastily thrown a long cloak about him as the door had been opened.

"General Greene, my daughter Isabel, Miss Sarah Burton, my niece, and——" said the Judge, formally presenting the soldier.

"Your pardon, Mr. Justice," promptly broke in the tall young man in the cloak, "you need not introduce me to General Greene. My present business requires that I preserve my incognito."

"As you please," remarked the Judge; "the General will, I am sure, respect your wishes in these troublous times. As my daughter has said, sir, I am a loyalist. My father fought for King George, and I am too old to change my politics now. At the same time, I make you welcome for the night as an individual. May I not offer you some refreshment? It is some hours since you supped, doubtless?"

"Yes," replied General Greene, smiling, "it is. I think that I supped night before last, and I have a dim idea that I had breakfast this morning, but it was of so slight a nature that I can scarcely be sure of it."

"Mercy!" cried the smaller woman. "To what a pitch has the Revolution been reduced! Supper night before last and breakfast this morning! I think a general might at least get something to eat out of an army——"

"He could hardly eat his soldiers, though," answered the American officer, simply, "and in my army the general fares no better than the private. But I beg you not to inconvenience yourself on my account; we are used to it," he added, smiling again.

"We are proud to serve you, sir," exclaimed Isabel. "Know, sir," she continued, "that we are Americans, heart and

soul! *My* father did not fight for the King. Come, Sarah, let us get something for the General ourselves."

"May Heaven bless you for your kind words and kind actions!" answered the soldier, as he sat down before a table and rested his head upon his hands in deep thought and dejection. Presently, as he found placed before him by the hands of the two girls the best meal that he had tasted for a long time, he brightened, and remarked, gratefully, "See how your kindness has changed my condition. Though wet still and tired too, I am no longer alone. In a moment I shall be no longer hungry——"

"And when you take this," interrupted Sarah, drawing a small netted purse from the pocket of her dress, "you will not even be penniless."

"Sarah! Sarah!" remarked the Judge, reprovingly.

"Sir! Sir!" responded Sarah, courtesying, "'tis my money, I believe, and though the amount be but little, I give it gladly for the cause of my country!"

"Let me add my contribution," cried Isabel, supplementing Sarah's gift with a larger and more bulky purse.

"To think," groaned the Judge, "that my own money, in the hand of my wayward daughter, goes to support a cause I abhor! General Greene, you cannot accept——"

"Sir," said the General, quietly, "in the service of my country I accept everything but insult. This little sum," lifting the two purses in his hand, "insignificant as it is, represents the treasure-chest of the American army. It will perhaps put shoes on some barefoot soldier, feed a few hungry men, give a musket to another, further the cause of liberty by some trifle in some other way. I take it gratefully, as it is

given generously. 'Tis by such trifles as these that revolutions are made, sir."

"If Justice Burton desires that the money be returned," remarked the tall stranger, rising, "I shall have great pleasure in securing it." As he spoke he stepped threateningly toward General Greene, who met his advance without moving a muscle. Shooting at him a glance of determination and authority, the General cried, sharply,—

"Retire, sir, and presume not to meddle with that which does not concern you!"

"Meddle, sir!" cried the other, indignantly. "You shall answer——"

"By no means," interrupted Judge Burton. "There shall be no quarrelling here! The amount is but a trifle, besides——"

"You forget yourself, sir!" exclaimed Isabel, turning on the young man, her face flushing with anger, her blue eyes flashing.

"By what right do you presume to interfere?"

"Sir Fran—the Colonel, that is, does not wish to see the property of his betrothed devoted to the cause of the Revolution," interjected Sarah, sharply, her black eyes sparkling with mockery and laughter. It was an insulting remark, and the face of the tall young man, whom the girl had addressed as Colonel, darkened.

"Will you never cease to harp on that string?" he muttered, turning toward her irresolutely.

"Not so long as it is stretched so taut that it vibrates at a touch, sir," she answered, mockingly.

"And I should like to know, sir," continued General Greene, calmly, "by what right you presume to interfere with the affairs of the American army. Am I to hold you an enemy to the cause?"

"Hold me as you like, sir," responded

the other, carelessly, " 'tis a matter of indifference to me."

" Your name, sir, and station," asked the General, sternly.

" My name is——"

2

GENERAL GREENE AND CAPTAIN BAIRD HEAR TIDINGS

BUT before the answer was delivered the sound of a horse splashing through the mud at a hard gallop broke upon the party. As Greene had done, the horse was stopped before the porch, and a man sprang from the saddle, rushed up to the door, upon which he thundered with the butt of his pistol.

"Open!" cried an excited voice. "Open immediately in the name of the Continental Congress!"

"That is a name, sir," shouted the old Judge, infuriated by this new interruption, "which carries no power here!"

"General Greene!" cried the man outside. "He is here, I am told! I have tidings of importance! I must see him! Open at once, or I will force the door!"

"Try it!" exclaimed Judge Burton, with rising choler, but on the instant General Greene stepped quickly toward the door. At the same moment the tall officer sprang forward to prevent him. Sarah's movement, however, was as quick as his. She caught him by the arm and detained him for a second, just long enough, in fact, to enable Greene to reach and unbar the door.

"Well, there is some compensation," muttered the Colonel, looking down at the laughing face so near his shoulder, "in being held back by you, after all!"

"Fie! This from Isabel's betrothed!"

whispered the girl, smiling at him as the General flung open the door. Instantly a drenched young officer in a faded, worn-out American uniform, wearing a shining leather helmet glistening with wet, with a draggled brush upon it, sprang into the room and saluted.

"General Greene," he said, "I come from——"

"Morgan?" the General cried, his face aflame with anxiety and hope.

"Yes, sir."

"And your news?"

"Victory!"

"Praise be to God! Where was it?"

"At the Cowpens on the French Broad. Tarleton attacked us on the morning of the 17th. He was utterly and entirely defeated! We killed and wounded some three hundred, took six hundred and fifty prisoners, captured one thousand stand of

arms, two field-pieces, two colors, and thirty-four wagons with their horses. General Morgan is now pushing hard for the Yadkin. Colonel Tarleton was wounded by Colonel Washington. I met Lieutenant Grey at Salisbury. He rode on to deliver your orders to General Morgan, and told me you were here."

"Thank God! Thank God!" cried Greene, fervently. "And our loss?"

"Seventy-three, sir!"

"Wonderful! Your name and rank, sir?"

"Baird, Curtis Baird, sir. I am a lieutenant in Washington's horse."

"I shall remember it, and as soon as there is a vacancy you shall have a captaincy." The General sank into deep thought for a few moments.

"Has Lieutenant Baird no word of greeting for me?" asked Isabel, quietly, stepping out from the corner of the room,

where in shadow she had listened to him deliver his message.

"Isabel! Miss Burton! You here!" he cried, in surprise, his face flushing as he looked upon her. The next moment he sprang eagerly forward, but stopped suddenly in the face of her uplifted palm.

"Why not here?" she cried. "It is my home. I bid you welcome to it, and I congratulate you on your news," she added, extending her hand. He seized it, bent low over it, carried it to his lips, exclaiming,—

"It is worth the victory to be so congratulated! Oh, Isabel, since I saw you at Charleston——"

"'Tis a bad lookout for a—soldier of fortune, that, sir," whispered Sarah, meaningly, to the Colonel, still restraining him, as General Greene once more entered the conversation.

"Justice Burton, I am afraid that I shall

not have the privilege of passing the night under your roof, after all. This news is of such importance that I must ride at once, and ride hard. Captain Baird, you are weary, perhaps too worn out to go on?"

"No, sir, not in the service of my country, but my horse——"

"Ah!" said Greene.

"He can hardly go another step."

"True; and mine is in an equally bad condition." He paused a moment. "Justice Burton, I fear we will have to trespass further upon your hospitality. Can you—will you—let us have a horse apiece? We will leave our own in pledge——"

"No, sir, I will not!" thundered the Judge—"not to save the rebel army or its chief from destruction! What! My horses for the enemies of the King!"

"Then we will have to take them, Mr. Justice," said the younger man, bluntly.

"And who are you, to do this thing?"

cried the Colonel, forgetting his desire for concealment in his anger. He shook himself free from Sarah and sprang forward.

"And who are you, to stop us, sir?" exclaimed Baird, resolutely.

"I am Sir Francis Duane," replied the other, promptly, dropping his cloak and revealing the uniform of a British soldier, "a lieutenant-colonel on Lord Cornwallis' staff!"

"Ah, so!" returned Baird, promptly. "We take you prisoner, then. We are two to one."

"No, sir, not while I can wield a sword," cried the Judge, springing to the side of Sir Francis, who seemed in no wise daunted. "This gentleman is my guest, as was General Greene. He is here on peaceful errand to see his—my daughter, to whom he is betrothed, and I can permit no disturbance in the house. I beg you to retire, gentlemen."

"Isabel! Betrothed!" exclaimed Baird. "Do I hear aright?"

"Miss Burton, sir!" thundered the Judge, "to you and all the world until——"

"Until she becomes Lady Duane," said Sir Francis, finishing the sentence.

"Lieutenant Baird, I—I——" faltered Isabel.

"The Justice is right," interrupted the General. "Within this house this night there is peace. Sir, we leave you unmolested, and hope for an untrammelled meeting later."

"Your courtesy does you honor, sir," replied the English officer, smiling politely. "I hope to meet you on the battle-field. As for this story about Morgan, give me leave to disbelieve it."

"You give me the lie, then, sir," cried Baird, starting forward.

"As you please," remarked the Englishman, calmly.

"We will settle the question now, then."

"Put up your sword, Captain Baird," peremptorily said General Greene, stepping between them; "you are in the service of your country, and I doubt not before long to give you ample opportunity for meeting Colonel Sir Francis Duane on the field. As for the horses, I fear, Mr. Justice, we must take them."

"Nay," cried Isabel, springing forward, "you shall have my horse!"

"And Captain Baird shall have mine!" added Sarah.

"We will take them as freely as they are given, young ladies," thankfully continued the General, "and will leave our own in pledge that we will some day return them. It pains me," he added, gravely, looking at Isabel, "that you are betrothed to an enemy of your country."

"'Tis my father's wish, not mine, sir."

"Isabel!" cried Sir Francis.

"My daughter!" exclaimed the Judge, threateningly.

"Ah, well," said the General, "here is a house divided. At any rate, your kindness to me this night I shall never forget. Come, Mr. Baird, the horses are at the door. We must get on."

"Miss Burton," said the latter, bowing low before her, "I wish you joy. Farewell! As for you, sir," he continued, sternly, inclining toward the Englishman, "I pray God for a speedy meeting!" He turned sharply on his heel, clapped his helmet on his head, lifted his sword, and followed the General out of the room.

"Your land tenure seems insecure, Sir Francis," remarked the aggravating Sarah, *sotto voce* again.

As the two officers rode away, Judge Burton closed the door behind them with an inhospitable crash. Isabel sank down

in a chair, buried her face in her hands, and sobbed wildly. Sarah leaned against the wall, contemplated the Colonel with earnest scrutiny, and laughed bitterly. After a momentary hesitation, the soldier stepped over to Isabel's side and laid his hand lightly on her shoulder.

"A nice situation, this!" he remarked, wrathfully; "and pleasant actions from my prospective bride."

Isabel shook off his hand and made no reply.

"Have you nothing to say?" he demanded, and then his eye wandered to where Sarah stood regarding him. As if the interrogation had been addressed to her, she replied, promptly,—

"Nothing, sir. You forget I am not your betrothed."

"I would to Heaven you——" burst forth Sir Francis, his eyes flashing, as he half turned toward the girl, who laughed,

shook her head, and, raising her finger, remarked,—

"Remember the broad acres and the broken treasury, Sir Francis!"

The soldier stamped his foot in vexation at this insulting insinuation. At the same time Isabel raised her head and looked at her father.

"Father," she said, "I cannot do it! I——"

"Silence, girl!" exclaimed the Judge. "You have given your word. It has been arranged since years past between Duane's father and myself."

"I will hold no woman as an unwilling bride," interrupted Sir Francis, proudly.

"And your promise, too, has been given, sir. The betrothal has been publicly announced," continued the Judge, turning upon him. "Let there be no more of this. The affair must go on. Never shall it be said that the word of a Burton was passed

in vain! 'Tis a suitable match, and shall be made—nay, it is! The condition of our affairs demands it."

"But that American?" responded Duane, uncertainly.

"Isabel shall never marry an enemy to her King!" remarked the Judge, solemnly, lifting his hand,—"at least, not with my consent and blessing. But why argue further? It is settled."

"Oh, sir!" said Isabel, despairingly, to Sir Francis, "why bring up the old subject? As you say, sir," turning to her father, "it is settled, and we might as well go on with it. Sir Francis, as I have said before, I respect and esteem you, and I am willing to—be——"

"Sacrificed, you would say, madam!" cried the young man, sharply. "'Tis too much! But I must be away! I must take the news I have heard about Morgan, which I have affected to disbelieve, but

which is probably true, after all, to his Lordship without delay. Mr. Justice, will you lend me a horse from your supply, the young ladies having exhausted theirs?"

"You might have had mine, if I had known," remarked Sarah, softly.

"With the greatest pleasure, Colonel, the best in the stables!" exclaimed the older man, ringing a bell and giving the necessary directions to a slave. "Go upon your duties, Sir Francis, and when you have chased this rebel horde out of the State, I venture to predict you will find Isabel more complaisant. We are all wrought up by the exciting events of the evening; matters will take a different complexion later, believe me."

"I trust so, sir," remarked Duane, gravely. "I wish I were as sure of——"

"Broad acres?" suggested Sarah, who was standing close at hand again. Her

remark was not heard by any one except Duane, who continued, with his brow darkening,—

"Of the affections of Miss Isabel Burton as I am of defeating these upstart Americans."

"Your horse is at the door, sir," said the Judge. "Remember that while you are in the province Overbrook is home to you. I shall be here for perhaps a month longer, and after that at Guilford, where I go to hold court. Meantime, good-luck and God-speed to you, my boy!"

"Thank you. Good-by, sir. Miss Isabel, you sent the American officer off with your horse; have you nothing for me?"

"I wish you good fortune, sir."

"And success too?"

"Not that," answered Isabel, bravely. "Personally, I wish you well, but you are —an enemy to my——"

"Isabel! This to your betrothed!" interjected her father.

"It is enough," answered Duane, proudly, bending forward and pressing a kiss upon her forehead. He turned away to meet the mocking eyes of Sarah again.

"One cannot have broad acres and love too, it seems," she whispered.

But he had his revenge for all her insulting words, for he seized her slight form in his arms, lifted her up, and, exclaiming, "Allow me a kinsman's privilege," kissed her fervently on the lips. The blood rushed into her face like a flame.

"How dare you!" she cried, stamping her foot, as he put her down. "I hope the Americans will—will——"

"What?" spurring her on.

"Make you pay dear," she answered, bravely, "for this outrage to—to their countrywoman!"

"No price," he murmured, so low that

she alone could hear, "would be too great to pay for such a privilege. By Heaven! I have half a mind——"

"Remember, I have no broad acres," she answered, defiantly, with spirit still unabated. Beaten by her persistency, Duane turned and left the room in anger. As they heard him galloping away Isabel gave an expression of relief, and, strange to say, Sarah took the place that the other girl had recently vacated at the table, and in her turn sobbed aloud.

"What is the matter with you, Sarah?" asked Isabel, curiously. "Are you sorry that he is gone?"

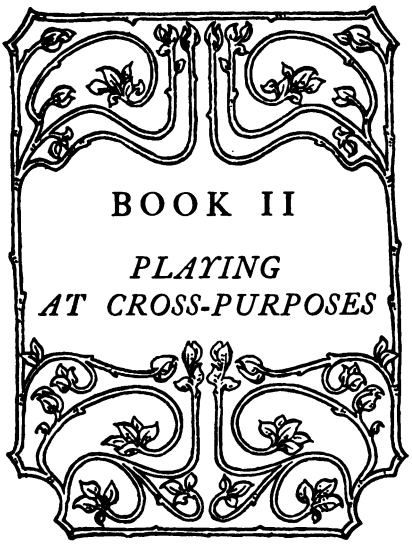
"Sorry!" remarked the younger girl, vindictively. "He is your betrothed, not mine, and I hate him!"

So they all played at cross-purposes. Curtis Baird and Isabel Burton had grown up together on adjoining plantations, and they had never known how they loved

each other until Judge Burton had forced the betrothal between his daughter and the son of his old friend, Sir Francis Duane. Sir Francis Duane came of an ancient though impoverished family in England, and the broad acres of Colonel Burton, who was one of the richest men in the South, coupled with the personal qualities and great beauty of Isabel Burton, his only daughter and heiress, had made him anxious to carry out the wish of the Judge, which had been the cherished dream of his father as well.

Sarah Burton was the Judge's niece and ward and Isabel's cousin. She was possessed of a very modest competence, and made her home with the Burtons, a welcomed member of the family. With the perversity of humanity, after he had become engaged to the stately Isabel, Sir Francis had fallen head over heels in love with her small and not especially beautiful

cousin. As for Sarah, she had not discovered her feelings even to herself, and to Sir Francis she presented the appearance of an implacable tease. It was all desperately annoying to him, and had it not been for his poverty he would have abandoned Isabel and thrown himself at her cousin's little feet.



BOOK II

PLAYING AT CROSS-PURPOSES

EARLY in the evening of a clear bright moonlight night a few days later, Captain Curtis Baird, his appointment to that higher rank having been confirmed and his commission issued in the interim, drew rein at the entrance of the stockade of Overbrook once more. The negroes, under the direction of the Judge, had completed the enclosure, and the gate was shut and barred. Negligent watch—none at all, in fact—

had been kept, owing perhaps to the absence of the master and the nearness of the British army, so that the American, who had reached the top of the hill unobserved, remained unnoticed before the closed entrance.

General Greene had sent him to hurry up Morgan after the two had left the plantation, and having speedily fallen in with that redoubtable soldier, Baird had delivered his orders and was on his way back to join General Huger and the main army. Finding himself in the vicinity of Overbrook again, he had turned aside for another sight of the woman who reigned in his heart. The certainty that he had lost her had only enhanced her charms and added the last touch to the fervency of his passion.

It was a very reckless and imprudent thing to do, as the delay caused by the divergence had placed him in the very midst

of the British forces then beginning their advance in pursuit of the retreating Americans. The country was filled with foraging parties of Tarleton's horse and bodies of light infantry; while many groups of those undisciplined and unattached followers of an army,—masterless men,—who work sad havoc among the peaceful inhabitants in the field of operations, were roaming at random seeking whom they might devour without respect to party allegiance. However, as Baird's military errand had been despatched, he jeoparded nothing but his own liberty or life, and he thought but little of these things when measured by the depth of his love and the consciousness of his loss.

He had succeeded, on account of his thorough knowledge of the country and by that address and resourcefulness which marked his character, in eluding all dangers hitherto, and had arrived safely at Over-

brook at last. In the eagerness of his consuming desire, during the last few miles of his journey as he approached the haven of his heart, he had neglected some of his precautions, and had not noticed that he had been closely followed for some time by a solitary horseman.

The pursuing rider had stopped in the shadow of the grove of trees at the foot of the hill and was intently watching Baird's figure at the top in full view in the bright moonlight sparkling from his polished leather head-piece. Had the darkness under the trees permitted, and had the heavy riding-cloak he wore been lifted, the scarlet-and-white uniform of a British officer of rank would have been revealed.

As he waited he drew a heavy cavalry pistol from its holster and, after cocking it, lifted it and took careful aim at the figure on the hill. The distance was great, still the shot was a possible one. But his

finger did not press the trigger. Presently his hand fell to his side; but in a moment he raised the pistol again and took aim once more. Something, however, restrained the watcher, and the weapon, undischarged, was finally replaced in the holster.

The Englishman had good cause for hating Baird, for he was convinced that the rider he had been tracking was his American rival, although if he had been deeper in love with Isabel Burton his hatred would probably have been more intense than it was. But in any event, the soul of the gallant British soldier revolted against the act of slaying an unsuspecting man by shooting him in the back—that would be murder. If he could have had him face to face with swords crossed he could have killed him cheerfully—that would have been war.

Still, he felt it necessary to capture his

enemy without regard to his personal feelings, killing him if there were no other way, for he naturally surmised that Baird might be in possession of information or despatches, the delivery of which to General Greene it would be well to prevent. For Greene was an officer whom long experience had taught all of the English generals to respect thoroughly, and when playing the game of war with him they could afford to neglect no point however small.

Further, the presence of any American officer, or soldier, within the English lines, even if he were not Baird, was a thing of much moment, and his return was to be prevented on general principles, if possible. Sir Francis Duane was afraid of nothing,—unless it might be Miss Sarah Burton,—but to ride out in the moonlight and attempt to surmount the hill and capture the man he had been tracking would probably afford him that chance of escape which the

Englishman wished to deny him. Therefore he sat still in the shadow like a good soldier and considered the situation.

They were a meditative pair of young gentlemen, Baird examining the stockade at the top of the hill, and Sir Francis surveying Baird from the bottom. Sir Francis, however, seemed to have entirely the better of the situation. At any moment he might happen across a party of Tarleton's horsemen on some nocturnal raid, or some other British detachment under a roving commission, in which case all that he would have to do would be to surround the house in case Baird effected an entrance and capture him forthwith.

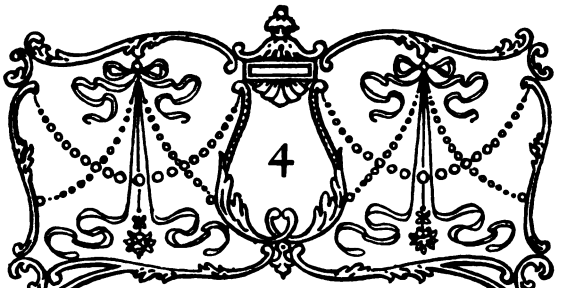
He was also certain that there were no Americans in the vicinity, and consequently he was greatly relieved when he heard the sound of cavalry trotting gently along the road. He turned back from the edge of the wood and rode cautiously down the

road. It was well in those days and at that time constantly to be on guard, especially at night, but Sir Francis easily made himself known to the approaching horsemen, who proved to be the redoubtable Colonel Tarleton himself with a dozen or more of his troopers.

Tarleton's aid was at once gladly proffered to effect the capture of Captain Baird. Since his overwhelming defeat at the Cowpens, in which Washington's horse had played so prominent and decisive a part, Tarleton's hands fairly itched to get hold of the members of that brilliant corps. He responded with alacrity to Sir Francis' suggestion, and the little party soon reached the confines of the forest. As they halted on the edge of the wood and looked toward the house they saw that Baird's horse was hitched to the stockade by the bridle-rein, but that he himself had disappeared.

Dismounting their men and leaving two

or three to guard the horses, Duane and Tarleton, followed by the remainder of the soldiery, crept quietly up the hill. When they reached the stockade unnoticed they found the place as still as it had been before.



THE LADIES TALK OF HEARTS

IN the great hall at Overbrook Isabel Burton sat in her father's deep old-fashioned arm-chair, gazing at a wood-fire blazing and burning on the hearth. She rested her face in her hands with her elbows on her knees; a neglected volume lay upon the floor at her feet. A little distance away, Sarah sat on a low stool, her two hands clasped in her lap. Her body was bent forward, and she, too, was gazing into the fire. The

candles on the table and in the sconces were unlighted, and the room was dark, save for the fitful gleam of the crackling logs and glowing embers. Both girls, in every line of their drooping, listless figures, were pictures of utter dejection.

"Sarah," said Isabel, mournfully, at last breaking the silence, "I am the most unhappy woman in the world!"

"Why should you be?" asked Sarah, conscious of a similar feeling in her own heart, which, however, she did not dare disclose. "You have wealth and beauty, name and station, a lover who is devoted to you——"

Isabel brightened instantly.

"Oh, Sarah, you dear, is he?" she cried, lifting her head. "Do you think so? Do you really think so?"

"Think it!" answered Sarah. "I—I—aren't all lovers devoted? How could he help but be?" she added, evasively,

looking mournfully at the other girl's splendid beauty. "You have everything, Isabel, everything that a man wants. Wealth and beauty, name and station," she repeated her previous statement, half soliloquizing, "and charm and goodness, too, and I, nothing but a sharp tongue." Her voice dropped to a mournful whisper over the last clause, which her cousin, immersed in her own grief, did not hear.

"Yes, yes, men have said so. But what difference does it all make, after all," sighed Isabel, dejectedly, "since I am engaged to another?"

"Another!" exclaimed Sarah, in surprise; "why, I am talking about Colonel Duane!"

"Oh!" remarked the other, indifferently; "Sir Francis Duane? I don't care whether he loves me or not!"

"Isabel, were you thinking about Curtis Baird?"

"Yes, I was!"

"Oh, for shame! How very wrong!"

"Wrong or not wrong, I can't help it; and, besides, you don't know anything about it!"

"Perhaps not," answered the younger girl, "but I am surprised, nevertheless. Sir Francis is a gallant gentleman, handsome, distinguished, well born and bred, brave, witty——"

"Mercy on me, Sarah, do you hold a brief for him?"

"Certainly not, but I——"

"Well, spare me a further catalogue of his virtues, if you love me; besides, those things count for nothing unless there is love, and I don't believe Sir Francis cares anything for me, and I certainly don't care anything for him! I respect him and all that, but if you loved any one yourself, you would know that these things do not matter."

If Isabel could have known how Sarah's heart was beating at that very moment at the thought of Sir Francis, she would have certainly concluded there was no knowledge in her own possession which her cousin lacked, and if Sarah had only spoken out her honest thought, what loads of trouble and days of sorrow might have been spared. But Sarah had learned in poverty to control her feelings and subordinate herself. Her duty seemed plain.

"I think it is very wrong, Isabel, for you to talk and feel in this way." She spoke with all the gravity of a younger reproving an older friend. "Sir Francis is in every way a suitable match for you, and I have no doubt you will forget Captain Baird in time and be abundantly happy when you are married."

"Sarah, you have been talking with father, or else you got that out of a book. It's perfect nonsense! I won't be happy

with anybody! Would you under such circumstances? But what does a child like you know about it? I tell you, I love him, I love him, and that's an end of it! I believe you don't care for anybody, —any man, that is! I don't suppose you ever will!"

"I suppose not," answered Sarah, mournfully, "and it won't make any difference if I do, Isabel," she continued, tremulously. "I am so little, so plain, and so poor, nobody will care for me."

"There you go again with your everlasting depreciation of yourself. I am ashamed of you! You are little, to be sure, but then some men prefer little women. Sir Francis told me that he did. Why he made an exception to his preference in my case I don't understand. And as for looks! While you have not the red and white complexion and the blue eyes that I have, my dear little cousin, there are

times when you are really dazzling! When that dark-brown cheek of yours gets a flush of mad red on it, and those big black eyes snap and sparkle, I tell you, you are positively dangerous! Why, I used to grow so jealous of you——"

"Jealous of me! oh, Isabel! You know Sir Francis——"

"Goodness, child! Why will you harp on Sir Francis? I am not talking of him! I could never be jealous of him. I mean —Curtis."

"Isabel, that man worships the ground upon which you walk!"

"Oh, Sarah, you love!" exclaimed Isabel; "do you really think so?"

"Think so? I know it! Don't you remember how he looked last week when he heard you were engaged to Sir Francis, here in this very room?"

"Yes, yes; wasn't it heavenly? But what's the use? Sir Francis also worships

the ground I walk on—when it is my own land!" she added, bitterly.

"Oh, you wrong him, I am sure!" answered Sarah, feebly, entirely forgetful of the fact that she herself had goaded Sir Francis to madness by her iteration of that same idea.

"I do not," replied Isabel, stubbornly; "you know he does, and if I were, indeed, poor——"

"Like me," interrupted Sarah.

"He wouldn't look at me; and don't say you are poor any more, Sarah. You know I would give you anything on earth—half of all I have is yours. Gracious heavens, I would give it all to get rid of Sir Francis!"

"And I wouldn't take it, as you know perfectly well, and if you did give it all up, I think Sir Francis is too thoroughly a gentleman to let that make any difference."

"Sarah Burton, one would think Sir Francis was engaged to you and not to me, from the way you defend him!"

"Engaged to me!" responded Sarah, with greatly simulated dignity; "pray do not jest upon such a subject. He never gave me a thought, nor I him, save as a cousin, of course." Oh, lying Sarah!

"Well, he certainly gave you a most uncousinly kiss in the hall here," continued Isabel, maliciously. "If I loved him I would have been furiously jealous!"

"Wasn't it outrageous!" remarked Sarah, still striving for outward composure. "I don't know how he dared—I burn with shame at the thought of it!" Only it wasn't shame that sent the blood to her cheeks, after all. "But this is all idle talk. Sir Francis doesn't love me, and I wouldn't care if he did!"

Sarah was a most mendacious person on occasion, it would seem.

"And he doesn't love me, either," continued Isabel, "and, like you, I don't care whether he does or not."

"Curtis Baird loves you, though," urged Sarah, anxious to change the course of the conversation.

"And I do care very much about that," answered Isabel, frankly. "But, as I said, what's the use? We are all playing at cross-purposes. How on earth it will end I don't know. Our lives seem to have got into a dreadfully tangled condition, and I don't see who is to cut the knot or unravel the skein," she went on, despairingly.

"With your permission, I!" interjected a deep voice from the corner of the room.

The girls screamed and sprang to their feet.

"You!" cried Isabel, as with eyes keen through affection she made out the tall form of Curtis Baird standing by the foot of the stairs.

"Even I," he answered. "I will cut the Gordian knot if you will let me."

"How much have you heard?" asked Isabel, hurriedly. "How came you here? What means this visit?"

"I heard you say you—you cared," he replied, softly, stepping toward her.

"Shame! Shame!" she exclaimed, shrinking back; she had not spoken frankly for his ears. "How dared you listen?"

"'Twas innocently done," answered Baird. "I am riding back to the American army after having carried General Greene's orders to General Morgan. I found myself to-night on the old road. I could not pass by the house which sheltered you without at least attempting to see you. I came here for that purpose, determined to get speech with you, to make one last appeal to you! I found the stock-

ade completed, the door barred. I left my horse outside——"

"The horse I lent you, sir?" interrupted Sarah.

"No, Miss Sarah, that is safe in camp, and yours, too, Isabel. This is one I borrowed. I crept around the stockade and found a place where I managed to scale the wall, and then I came here. There was a window open; I saw no one. I swear to you, I had no intention of eavesdropping!"

"But you heard!"

"Yes, Isabel, I did hear, but I knew you loved me, and love like mine compels an answer and assures a response. Don't you remember that night at Charleston when you——"

"Enough, sir!" cried Isabel. "You forget that I am engaged to Sir Francis Duane!"

"Would to God that I could forget it!" exclaimed the soldier. "But why need the

engagement continue, if you do not love him?"

"I have not said so," answered Isabel.

"Have you not?" cried Baird. "Is it, indeed, true? Do you love him? Have I been mistaken? Do women, then, so lightly change?" He stopped. "If that be so, I have naught to say. I came here under a misapprehension, on a fool's errand," he added, bitterly.

Isabel turned slowly away. How beautiful she looked in the soft illumination of the flickering flame. His soul yearned for her. He stepped nearer to her.

"Isabel," he whispered, stretching out his hands toward her. Still no answer. He noted the rapid rise and fall of her bosom, but she did not move nor speak. He might have swept her to his breast and she would have been glad, but she gave no other outward sign of her feelings.

"'Tis over, then," he said at last, turning

away with set lips and a white face. All his life he would see the picture of that girl in her beauty in the light of the dying fire—and she was not for him! He groaned aloud.

"You risked your life for this, Captain Baird, did you?" said Sarah, pitying the grief-stricken, disappointed lover. "Ah, well, I, at least, can sympathize with you. There are others in the world who love and cannot have. But now, sir, you must go, and go in haste! My uncle is expected home to-night. He will be accompanied by other gentlemen of his party. Should he find you here——"

"Madam," cried Baird, stepping forward, and taking Sarah's proffered hand, "at least you are kind to me. I am grateful for your sympathy. From the bottom of my heart I thank you." He bent low over her hand and kissed the brown fingers fervently.

"Stop!" cried Isabel, her jealous soul aflame. "I—you—it is not Sir Francis that I—oh, what shall I do?"

"Do?" cried Baird, springing to her side and encircling her with his arm. "Come with me!"

AN INTERESTING OCCURRENCE ON THE STAIRS

"HARK!" said Sarah, suddenly; "I hear footsteps!" She ran to the shuttered window and peeped through the bars. "The moonlight sparkles on a drawn sword!" whispered the girl. "The enemy is there!"

At that moment a foot stepped heavily on the porch, a sabre-hilt thundered imperiously against the door.

"Open!" cried the voice of Sir Francis Duane. "Open in the name of the King!"

"Sir Francis Duane! Oh, fly, fly!" cried Isabel, thrusting Baird from her.

"Too late!" whispered Sarah. "We must conceal him!"

"Where?"

"There!" answered the other girl, pointing to a room just off the landing half-way up the stairs.

"My room!"

"Where else? Quick!"

Again and again the sabre rattled against the door.

"Open, open!" repeated the voice. "We are soldiers of the King and demand instant admittance! Another moment and we will beat down the door!"

Pressing a kiss upon Isabel's fair hand, Baird leaped lightly up the stairs and entered the room, closing the door behind him. He had a sword and pistol by his side in his belt, and he determined not to give up without a struggle. As soon as

he disappeared Sarah opened the door. Sir Francis with drawn sword and cocked pistol in his hands, Colonel Tarleton following hard at his heels, entered the room. As if familiar with the usages of the place, he stopped by a small table and, with the butt of his pistol, struck a gong standing upon it. A negro servant appeared instantly.

"Lights here!" cried the Colonel, imperiously; "and tell Justice Burton——"

"My father is not at home," interrupted Isabel, summoning all her resolution to confront him. "And by what right do you presume to enter this house in this unceremonious manner? As the representative of my father, I demand an explanation!"

"Young ladies," cried Sir Francis, "your pardon! This is Colonel Tarleton, and we are here under military necessity. I understand Captain Curtis Baird—I be-

lieve you know him, madam," he continued, flashing a keen and jealous glance at Isabel—" is in this house. A man thought to be he was seen to enter the stockade not ten minutes ago. I am here to apprehend him, and with your permission I will proceed to search the house."

" You will do nothing of the kind, sir!" exclaimed Isabel. " In the absence of my father, this is my house. I will not allow it to be searched by you or any one. As a gentleman, sir——"

" Madam, I am here as an officer of the King. This is war; the common rules of courtesy must stand aside."

" Nothing, nothing shall be done here!" cried Isabel, determinedly. " I forbid it!"

" Do you deny that he is here, madam?"

" I deny nothing, sir!"

" Ah!" exclaimed the officer, stepping over to the corner of the hall and picking up from a chair, upon which it had been

placed, a polished helmet. "Some one is here, by this token. Does this helmet belong to the Justice, or is it, perchance, a new fashion in feminine head-covering? Perhaps you can explain its presence?" he went on, jealously.

"You jest, sir," exclaimed Isabel, faltering at the betraying sight.

"I was never more serious in my life, madam, as you will see," answered Sir Francis.

"Looks like an American helmet, Duane," remarked Tarleton. "I have never seen any of them, but I have heard what they wear."

"If you had looked behind you at the Cowpens, Colonel Tarleton, you would have seen a great many of them, no doubt," interrupted Sarah, with her usual keenness. "But perhaps you were too hurried on that occasion to notice anything!"

"Egad, Tarleton, she has you there,

man!" exclaimed Sir Francis, smiling at the discomfited officer. "And now, Miss Sarah, perhaps I can get the truth from you. Captain Baird is here, I feel sure. At least some one is here, and I suspect it is he. This helmet——"

"You can always get the truth from me," answered Sarah, guilelessly, adding, under her breath, "when I want to tell it!" "Since you force me to declare myself, Sir Francis, there is somebody here. This helmet belongs to a gentleman who—came —here—to see—me."

"What!" roared Sir Francis, his face flushing darkly; "I thought it was Isabel. That settles it!" he cried, jealously, the thought that Sarah was having a clandestine meeting proving much more discomforting than the feeling engendered by the idea that Isabel only was the object of the American's attention. "That settles it! I shall have him now at once! Where is

he? But never mind, we will search the house. Without there!" he called. "In here, two or three of you! Now rummage these rooms opening out of the hall," he added. "Tarleton, will you go with them? I will stay here."

"This is outrageous, shameful, sir!" exclaimed Isabel, her face flushing as the soldiers sprang through the house.

"I do not see how it concerns you, madam," answered Sir Francis, "since the—ah—gentleman does not come to see you."

The soldiers presently came swarming back into the hall, Tarleton reporting that they had found no one but the servants, though an open window in the dining-room showed where an entrance had been effected and possibly an exit.

"He cannot have escaped; we have his horse, and the house is surrounded. Let us go up-stairs, he must be there," said the Colonel.

Isabel sprang to the foot of the stairs, stretched her arms from the wall to the baluster and boldly confronted the officer. Sarah had moved even more quickly than she, and had sprung higher up to the landing, where she stopped behind her cousin.

"You shall not!" cried Isabel.

"Ah, he is there, then! Stand aside!"

"I will not!" cried the girl, resolutely, her face full of pride.

"Let me pass, girl!" exclaimed Sir Francis, roughly.

"Never!" she answered.

Unconsciously Sarah had stepped over to the door opening on the landing, and, like Isabel, had stretched her arms across it from side to side. It was a betraying motion.

"He is in that room, then. Whose apartment is it?" cried Sir Francis. "I remember, 'tis yours, Miss Burton."

"No, it is mine," cried Sarah, promptly, thinking to disarm his anger.

"Yours! By Heaven!"

It was the last straw. Mad with jealousy, he tore Isabel's hand away from the railing and leaped upon the stairs. At the same moment the door opened. Thrusting Sarah aside, Baird, who had heard the whole conversation, stepped out on the landing. He had no mind to die like a trapped rat. He raised his pistol and pointed it full at Sir Francis and pulled the trigger. As he did so his arm was struck violently upward and the bullet buried itself harmlessly in the opposite wall. Another report rang out in the smoke, as Sir Francis discharged his own pistol, and the bullet cut the air between Sarah and Baird on the landing. The hall was filled with smoke. Sarah was dazed for the moment by the concussion.

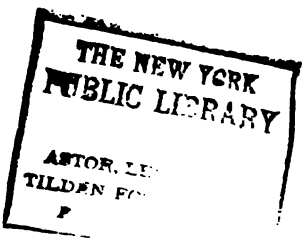
The swords of the two men were out

in a moment. They crossed blades in the smoke on the stairs. The air was filled with the sound of ringing steel. This time it was Isabel who interfered. As Tarleton and his men ran forward, she sprang at Duane, caught him by the waist and pulled him down the stairs. Tarleton and the others could not pass the two struggling figures. Love lent strength to her arms, she was not a weak woman, and she held the soldier with a grip of iron. He struggled vainly to break away. The soldiers dared not fire.

"Run! run!" Isabel cried to Baird. "Not this way!" she screamed, as he made a step down the stairs. "The house is surrounded! The bluffs—overlooking the river! Through the store-room! There is a coil of rope in the corner yonder! Quick, I can't hold him any longer!"

Instantly divining her plan, Baird sprang past Sarah shrinking against the wall, ran

They crossed blades on the stairs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up the stairs, darted into the store-room, bolted the door, and picked up the coil of rope, which by some chance had been left in the room, fastened it to a heavy piece of furniture, dropped it from the window, which overlooked the sheer bank of the river, swung himself over the sill, and rapidly slid down the rope.

At last untwisting Isabel's clinging arms and ruthlessly thrusting aside Sarah, who fruitlessly endeavored to bar the way, Sir Francis and Tarleton, followed by the soldiers, ran up the stairs and thundered upon the door. Presently the fastening gave way and they swarmed into the room, where they were followed hard by the two girls.

Sarah and Isabel ran first to the window, the others crowding around them. As they entered they heard a splash at the foot of the bluff, and presently they caught a glimpse of a dark form cleaving the

waters of the river in the moonlight. In the confusion Sarah cast off and dropped the rope, thus preventing pursuit that way.

"Back, men!" cried Sir Francis, seeing that the two women would prevent his firing upon the fugitive. "To your horses, all! Gallop toward the bridge and head him off!"

But those left within the room knew that the attempt would be useless, for long before the troopers could reach the horses and make the long circuit to the bridge, Baird would have reached the other bank and disappeared in the woodland.

Sir Francis stamped in vexation.

"You have played a traitor's part, madam!" he cried, turning sternly to Isabel.

"And I glory in the part, sir, and would fain do it again!"

"You aided a dangerous enemy of the King to escape!"

"I gave a good sword to the service of my country, sir!"

"I would have killed him!" cried Sir Francis, in passionate rage.

"With his blood upon your hands, sir, every dream that you have cherished, with me for the object, would have been ended. I saved you from murder, sir. You should be grateful."

"And you, madam," cried Sir Francis, turning to Sarah leaning back against the casement, looking very small and pale in the white moonlight. "I owe you something too, it seems, for this escape."

"You owe me more than that, sir," answered Sarah, equably, in spite of her beating heart.

"And what is it, pray, that I owe you, madam?"

"Life!"

"Ha, so!" cried the officer. "Ah!

that shot on the stairs! He missed me. Who struck up his arm?"

"I."

"And you did it for what?"

"Because I——"

"Did you care whether I——" he exclaimed, passionately.

"Care!" she cried, wildly. "I did it because I—I—love——" She stopped. "Isabel!" she added, lamely.

"Oh, at what cross-purposes we play!" exclaimed Sir Francis, bitterly disappointed.

"You may release me when you wish, and end it all!" cried Isabel, promptly and eagerly.

"Nay, madam," responded Duane. "I will hold you to your promise, and wed you in the face of the whole American army!"

This doughty declaration filled Isabel with sadness and Sarah with despair. They all turned presently and went down the

stairs into the hall. Colonel Tarleton met them there.

"He has escaped," he exclaimed, sulkily. "I wish I could have caught him. I hate that Washington and all his breed."

"Do you know him then, that you abuse a gallant gentleman behind his back?" exclaimed Isabel, hotly.

"'Fore God, ma'am, I didn't know you were his defender! A coarse, illiterate captain of horse; why, I am told he cannot write his name even!" answered Tarleton.

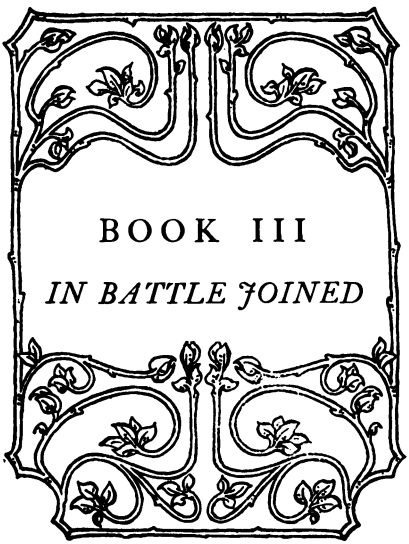
"Well, sir, it is evident that he can at least make his mark," interrupted Sarah, tartly, with delicious impudence, looking maliciously the while at a livid, scarcely healed wound on Tarleton's hand, which was evidence of Washington's skill as a swordsman at the battle of the Cowpens.

Tarleton's face flushed deeply at this biting rejoinder. With a half-muttered oath, he laid his hand on his sword and

stepped toward her. She faced him, smiling, with all her native courage; but she was none the less grateful when Duane, who had seen it all, quickly interposed, remarking,—

"Say what you please, Miss Sarah. Colonel Tarleton knows better than to insult a lady in my presence!"

There was something soothing to Sarah in Tarleton's discomfiture at her retort, but when the officers and soldiers had gone, and the Judge had returned, both women passed a wide-awake, miserable night in each other's arms—a night, alas! the precursor of many more.


BOOK III
IN BATTLE JOINED

6

WHAT HAPPENED AT GUILFORD

SIX weeks later, on the morning of the 15th of March, a little group of officers surrounding a rather large, thick-set man of about forty years of age, of commanding presence, with a ruddy face, broad brow, and flashing blue eyes, were looking intently down a long country road, which sloped down a gentle hill, crossed a shallow creek, climbed a steep acclivity, and lost itself in a bit of woodland which shut off

the view in the direction of their gaze. The officers sat their horses on the edge of a declivity overlooking the creek and the road.

The morning was bright and sunny and slightly cool. A gentle breeze swept through the trees, while not a cloud floated above in the heavens. The season was early and the country was gay with the first freshness of spring. Here and there among the pines and oaks the white of the first dog-wood blossoms could be seen lightening the grim shadows, where, under the shelter of the fallen leaves, the pink-and-white clusters of the trailing arbutus began to show their heads. The grassy slopes of the meadow before them were thick with early violets. In the marshes and brakes along the banks of the creek the yellow jasmine was putting forth its flower, and the air was filled with the fragrance of the honeysuckle growing in lux-

uriant profusion over the hedges and fences surrounding the meadows. Above the hum of conversation and the noise of restless thousands, the blue-bird was pouring forth his gallant soul in brilliant bursts of song.

The men of the little group were clad in faded and weather-stained Continental uniforms, and their faces were haggard from loss of sleep, exposure, and the burden of responsibility. The appearance of the leader was that of a man who had been under a terrible strain for a long period, but there was in his anxious face that morning a new expression, the touch of relief which comes from a determination, at last arrived at, to abide an issue.

Back of the group of officers a long, thin line of Continental troops in buff and blue were thrown along the edge of the hill in a concave formation, the sunlight sparkling from their gleaming bayonets. There were four slender regiments, averaging about

three hundred and fifty men each. By the newness of their uniforms and equipments, and from the character of the men themselves, it was plain to be seen that three of the regiments were composed of recruits.

On the right of the line were two regiments from Virginia, both inexperienced. Next to the Virginia brigade was a body of veteran Continentals, known as the First Maryland Regiment. The extreme left of the line was held by another body of Marylanders, known as the Second Regiment. The First Maryland Regiment was the very flower of the Continental army. It had shown its mettle in almost every battle in the Revolution from Long Island to the Cowpens. The old Second Maryland had been cut to pieces at Camden, and it was now composed of the rawest of recruits. Between the two Maryland regiments two pieces of artillery were stationed, covering the road.

Off to the left of the General's position, across the road in some fields, large bodies of troops were resting at ease. Among them were two regiments of Virginia riflemen, dressed in American hunting-shirts and fringed leggings, and carrying long, dangerous-looking rifles; but the great body was made up of militia from North Carolina and Virginia, who were, for the most part, ununiformed and armed with a heterogeneous variety of muskets, rifles, fowling-pieces, and so forth. There was not a bayonet in the whole body of perhaps three thousand men. A very different appearance, indeed, they presented from the orderly ranks of the Continentals.

Back of the troops stood the old brick court-house, surrounded by the straggling village of Guilford, a little place of perhaps two hundred souls. Around the court-house the baggage-train and camp-followers of the army were congregated.

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Two small six-pound guns had been drawn across the creek and were stationed in advance of every one else in the road at the entrance to the woodland. The little group of artillerists were covered by a body of horsemen, less than one hundred in number, in gay blue-and-white uniforms, the sunlight shining from their polished leather head-pieces as their horses shifted to and fro uneasily in the grass.

On the hills surrounding the position, a few manor houses, the centres of large plantations, might be seen embowered in the green foliage. One of those nearest the court-house was occupied by Judge Burton, who had brought his daughter and niece there to be with him during the spring term of court which he was holding. The session of that day was intermitted—not from any desire on the part of the Judge, be it spoken, for he would have held court on the Day of Judgment if a session

had been previously appointed for that time—because it was found impossible to secure the attendance of any one except the criminals, in view of the general excitement attendant upon the approaching battle.

The house, though at a safe distance from the hill and valley occupied by the American troops, afforded from the upper porch a fair view of the whole situation. Neglecting everything else since early morning, when the Continental soldiers had marched down the road, the two girls, Isabel and Sarah, had been on the balcony waiting and watching for the impending conflict in strained anxiety,—each having a lover on the field.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning. Suddenly far away to the southward the dull boom of cannon was heard, followed by fainter reverberations which spoke of volleys of musketry. The sound awoke everybody to attention.

"They are there, then," remarked General Greene, his worn face lighting as he turned to the little group of staff-officers. "Do you hear the sound, gentlemen? I judge them to be four or five miles away. Lee will delay their advance for an hour or two, and they will probably move circumspectly after that, so we shall have them upon us about noontime. We will fight them here. The men have had their breakfast, Colonel Carrington?" he asked, looking at the quartermaster.

"Yes, sir, some time ago," responded the latter.

"That is well. Will you have the baggage-train sent back to the ironworks on the Haw, Colonel, our rallying-point in case of defeat?—which may God avert! Mr. Grey, will you tell Generals Eaton and Butler to follow me promptly with the North Carolina militia? Cornet Hale, direct Generals Stevens and Lawson to be

ready to advance with the Virginia militia when they receive word from me. Tell Colonels Campbell and Lynch with their riflemen to follow the South Carolinians. General Huger and Colonel Williams, you will look after the right and left brigades on this hill. Keep the men in line, but let them lie at ease. They will have work enough to do later on. I will return after I have posted the other lines and take personal command here myself. 'Tis a pretty place for a battle. Captain Kirkwood, will you follow me with your Delawares? Now, gentlemen, let us go forward."

The Continentals on the hill had been near enough to hear every word that had been spoken. As they caught the General's meaning, they began a cheer which was presently taken up by every one on the field. After having been chased and hunted for two months, they were in marvellous good trim for a fight. The Gen-

eral's tired face flushed with pleasure at this demonstration as he rode down the hill.

Greene's combination of his force and Morgan's in the face of Cornwallis' efforts to prevent the junction, and his subsequent retreat from the Catawba to the Dan, had been one of the most masterly achievements in military science that the world had seen. The "ten thousand" had not made a more famous march. He had been pursued by the indefatigable Earl with a desperation and determination that would have won success from almost any other commander who ever lived. The English General, staking all upon the throw, had actually burned and abandoned his baggage and exhausted himself in a vain effort to reach the American. When he had turned back from the Dan, Greene, who had been re-enforced, followed upon his heels, as we have seen, and elected to give battle at Guilford Court-House.

The little body of officers soon reached the two pieces of artillery commanded by Captain Singleton, standing in the road. In obedience to Greene's command, the six-pound guns were limbered up, and the artillery, followed by Washington's cavalry and Kirkwood's veterans from Delaware, the last remnant of another gallant regiment, advanced along the road. General Greene rode through the trees for about half a mile until he came to an open field on the edge of the wood, where there was a stout rail fence. Here he halted and advanced the two guns forward on the road. He sent Washington's cavalry and Kirkwood's men off to the right, re-enforcing them, as it came on the field, by Lynch's Virginia regiment. On the left Campbell's riflemen and the infantry of Light-Horse Harry Lee's famous Legion were posted on a little hill. Between these two bodies,

back of the rail fence, he drew up the North Carolina militia.

The position was admirably chosen, and, resolutely defended, might be held for a long time even by green troops against veterans. Exhorting the militia to stand fast and deliver a few well-aimed volleys and then retire slowly without breaking, Greene was about to turn back to post the remaining lines, when he saw a horseman galloping furiously toward him along the road. He wore the green jacket of the cavalry of Lee's Legion, and when he drew near enough to see the party, he waved his hand frantically and shouted out,—

"They are coming, sir! We got in touch with them about four miles south of here and have defeated and dispersed Tarleton's cavalry, which was leading the advance. We drove them back upon the main body. Colonel Lee is skirmishing

with them now. He sent me on to tell you that he thinks the whole army is there, Cornwallis leading in person." Realizing his impetuosity, as he drew rein in front of the General he dismounted and saluted.

"That is well," replied his commander, smiling. "Go back to him, sir, and tell him we will meet the enemy at Guilford Court-House. Let him withdraw his cavalry and post them on the left flank, on that hill in the wood over yonder, with Campbell's riflemen to cover the militia. Gentlemen, we will have battle surely this morning. I'm glad the retreating is over."

The General then turned and rode back about three hundred yards into the thick of the woods. He stopped there and drew up the Virginia militia in a long line in the tangled brush under the trees. This body of militia had been in action before at Camden, where they had behaved disgracefully enough. It was believed that they

were desirous of wiping out the stigma they had incurred then, but General Stevens, who was in command of them, and who had been betrayed by their cowardice before, took no chances this time. He stationed trusty men as sentinels behind the line, with orders to shoot everybody who flinched from the guns and gave back. Having posted them as advantageously as the ground permitted, Greene slowly rode back to the Continentals upon the hill, who seemed to be in high spirits, for they greeted the commander they loved with enthusiastic cheers.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning now. In another hour or two the enemy would be upon them; it was a momentous day for the country and for the Revolution. If Greene's army were crushed and dispersed, the South would be hopelessly lost and the great State of Virginia would lie open to attack. Cornwallis had only

about twenty-five hundred troops to perhaps forty-five hundred Americans, but the British army was composed of picked men, many of whom had been fighting in America for five years. Every man was a veteran, while all but fifteen hundred of Greene's troops were raw militia, one-half of whom had never heard a shot fired in anger and upon whom experience had shown but little dependence could be placed. Of the regulars of the Continental line, not more than one-third were veterans, the rest being new troops who had never been under fire. The officers on both sides were excellent, there being but little to choose between them.

It was absolutely necessary for Greene to fight a battle. He could go on skilfully retreating and advancing without coming in touch with the enemy for an indefinite time, but the object of campaigns is not so much the preservation of

your own army as the annihilation of that of the enemy, and no amount of marching and countermarching, however brilliant, will produce that result. Armies must be beaten, therefore the American had elected to fight.

Cornwallis had been endeavoring to bring about a battle with his wily antagonist for the last two months, and he looked eagerly forward to repeating the brilliant success of Camden. In spite of his disparity in numbers, he was entirely confident of success.

About half-after eleven o'clock a trooper from the Legion informed Greene that Lee had established himself in the desired position in the rear of the left flank of the first line, and that the British were still some distance away, halting for dinner. The Americans dined from their scantily provided haversacks and waited, lying on their arms.

CÆSAR'S TENTH LEGION

AT half-after one o'clock the roar of a cannon broke the stillness of the afternoon. From behind the woodland the eager watchers presently saw a faint column of blue smoke rising over the tree-tops. The discharge was answered by a second and a third, which told that the American guns were engaged in a duel with the British artillery. Most of the men, especially the younger ones, though not yet called to attention,

instantly lost their listless and indifferent air; they straightened themselves up, grappled their weapons, and looked eagerly down the road, endeavoring to peer through the trees. The veterans of the First Maryland, with affected bravado, however, paid but little attention to the matter, though to the green regiments the sound was filled with ominous portent.

After about twenty minutes' continuous firing, the sharp crash of a volley rang through the wood near by; another and another followed; then the sound of faint cheering rose, and then—silence. Presently on the outskirts of the wood and far over to the left of the field a hatless man appeared, running wildly. As he ran they saw him throw away his gun and rush forward without arms. He was followed by a second, a third, and many others. Some of them were bleeding; one or two fell in the openings and lay still. Soon on either

flank a broken stream of men, white-faced and panting, plunged through the trees in panic terror and disappeared. The firing began again suddenly; the sharp crack of the Virginia rifles was now heard above the deeper and more crashing sound of the English muskets.

"Those North Carolina militia have failed us again, gentlemen. I hope the guns are safe," said Greene, compressing his lips, as his quick eye took in the whole scene. "The British have rushed them with the bayonet. Pray God that the Virginians hold!"

The Continentals were falling into line without orders now. Even the veterans of the Maryland line were giving way to the excitement of the pregnant moments. The gunners on the hill blew their matches, while the matrosses handled their pieces determinedly. At this moment Captain Baird galloped up to the General.

"Colonel Washington bids me report, sir," he cried, dismounting and saluting, "that the front line broke and ran, after two ineffective volleys, when the British charged, but that Lee and Campbell on the left appear to be hotly engaged and holding their own, and that Lynch and Kirkwood are retiring in good order upon the second line, which is already heavily engaged and standing up well. Our horse is still covering the left flank. The whole British army is upon us."

"Ride to the front, Captain Baird," said Greene, "and tell General Stevens to hold his line at all hazards as long as he can. Direct Colonel Washington to withdraw the horse from the trees and take position in the clearing off to the left, ready to cut down the enemy when they come into the open. He will know when to charge. Are the guns taken, sir?"

"No, sir; they have been drawn back

on the second line, and are doing good service."

"That is well; now go, sir," returned the General. "The Virginians are making a brave stand," he added, as he watched the young man gallop off to the front, "but they cannot hold out much longer. They will be on us presently." He turned to the officers behind him. "Bring your men to attention!" he cried.

The wood was now filled with the roar of the guns, and the crackling and rattling of the small arms rolled through the trees in continuous vibration with an ever-increasing volume of sound. Great masses of blue smoke drifted hither and thither and obscured the view.

Washington's cavalry presently came forth from the shelter of the trees; as they reached the open they broke into an easy trot, and as they leaped the creek and passed up the valley before the General

and his staff, sitting on the top of the hill, swords were waved in the air and the men cheered in salute. The Continentals behind fairly shouted with delight. Very handsome the little band of cavaliers looked as they rode by, following their gallant leader.

The Virginians were redeeming themselves, evidently. They were making a gallant stand. The battle roared on. The minutes wore away, and still the British did not appear. After a few moments of suspense, Greene turned to another staff-officer and bade him ride down to the second line and find out how the day went. Before the officer started, however, the Virginia militia began to appear through the trees. They were not running. They stopped, fired from behind the trees like experienced woodmen, and fell back once more, loading and firing again and again. General Stevens had them well in hand.

But as they slowly gave back they at last reached the open. There Stevens was wounded and had to be carried off the field. It was a demoralizing circumstance. As they were mainly without shelter now, they began to break; leaderless, they moved hastily around the left flank of the Continentals and poured down the Salisbury road, past the court-house, on the run. They had done splendid service, and no one could blame them for their retreat. It takes a veteran to face a bayonet, and a veteran with a bayonet at that, and these men were without that weapon.

In front of the hill Kirkwood's Delawares were retiring in excellent order; up the road Singleton brought his two pieces of artillery at a gallop. Directing an officer to endeavor to reform the Virginians behind the last line of defence, or failing that to rally them on the baggage-train back at the ironworks, the General turned

to the Continentals on the hill, his main dependence.

The moment was approaching,—it was at hand.

With the retreat of the Virginians the roar of the battle died away save on the extreme left, where the crackling musketry told that Lee and Campbell, cut off from the rest, were heroically fighting against heavy odds. The wood was cleared and the red coats of the British could be seen in the openings. Presently, reforming their lines under the shelter of the trees, they came out into the clearing.

Their ranks were closed up and redressed, the alignment perfected as if on parade; they had lost heavily in the advance through the wood, but they still presented a most formidable and splendid appearance that bright sunny afternoon. There on the right were the tall brass and leather helmets of the Hessians; next to them

the green plaids of the kilted Highlanders; on their left the black bearskins of the Guards; farther along the line stretched the brilliant scarlet of the Thirty-third Foot, Cornwallis' old regiment; while the extreme left was held by the Welsh Fusileers, the Prince of Wales' own. There were Yagers and Light Infantry covering either flank, and reserve battalions of Guards. Back of the centre was Cornwallis himself, surrounded by a brilliant staff and attended by a squadron of Tarleton's depleted cavalry. On the hill by him, the British battery of three guns, four-pounders, was drawn up. The British right wing was under the command of General Leslie, with Colonel Stewart supporting him; the left was under Colonel Webster. The supporting battalions of the Guards were under General O'Hara.

There was a brief lull in the battle, which was broken by the artillery on both

sides resuming the engagement. Under cover of the smoke Cornwallis gave the signal to Webster to advance. Webster's brigade ran rapidly down the hill and began mounting the opposite slope. At the same time Leslie's force was extended to the right, to attack the Americans in the flank if possible. Singleton's two guns, Kirkwood's Delawares, and the famous First Maryland Regiment were stationed in front of Webster's brigade. Those cool soldiers took a careful aim at the British approaching them, and, firing slowly and deliberately, by platoon and section, absolutely smashed the British advance.

The Englishmen hesitated and began to give ground. Colonel Webster, as brave an officer as ever fought, galloped to the front of his shattered lines to lead them on. Under the inspiration of his splendid presence, courage, and leadership, they halted, reformed, and resolutely came back

at the hill for another try; but as they approached the American lines once more they blazed forth in withering fire again. The intrepid Colonel was shot and instantly killed. The line wavered, broke, and ran. This time it did not rally.

Meanwhile, on the American left the Guards and the Highlanders had at last got within striking distance of the Second Maryland. Colonel Otho Williams, who commanded the American left brigade, saw the repulse of Webster's men and had hoped to repeat the feat on the other flank, but the British came on with splendid courage and grim determination, withholding their fire until near the American line, when they poured it in upon the raw Continentals. At this critical juncture, actuated by one of those unaccountable panics, in spite of everything the officers could do, the Second Maryland broke and fled. The militia had not run faster nor farther.

As a regiment it was gone. The left flank of the American army was open.

On the right the Virginia line was engaged at long shot, but was in no present danger. Cornwallis had ridden down into the thick of Webster's retreat and, seconded by O'Hara, was trying to urge the men to go forward again. They hesitated, and the front of the First Maryland was left clear for the moment. Realizing the danger to his exposed left flank, Greene left the centre and galloped to the First Maryland, his Tenth Legion, and ordered it to wheel to the left and open upon the Guards and the Highlanders, who were coming on flushed with victory, and had actually captured the two American guns on the left. They had surmounted the slope and were now on the hill.

The First Maryland responded gallantly to their General's demand. The horse of Colonel Gunby was shot, and he was

thrown violently to the ground, but John Eager Howard, their lieutenant-colonel, than whom no better soldier ever lived, sprang to the front of the line and, waving his sword, gave the command to wheel to the left. From the distance Webster's shattered brigade began to pour in a scattered fire, but they were held in check by the accurate shooting of the Delawares and Virginians. Meanwhile, the First Maryland swooped down on the Guards. After delivering a terrific volley at close range into the thick of the British, Howard lifted his sword and gave the command to charge with the bayonet.

It was the sort of game the British desired, and a game they had played before with brilliant success on many fields. There was a tradition in their army that Americans could not stand the British bayonet. The tradition was shattered that day. The veterans of Long Island, of

Princeton, of Trenton, of Brandywine, of Germantown, of Valley Forge, of Monmouth sprang forward eagerly to the attack. Bayonets crossed in bitter hand-to-hand conflict, and the battle raged with terrific ferocity in the smoke around the captured guns. The British fought desperately to retain their position, but, in spite of their dogged red-coat courage, the Marylanders would not be denied. The attack was pushed home and the English were driven from the guns. Leslie had been sent to another part of the field, Stewart was killed, and his men began to retire slowly, still fighting.

Supports were sent forward on the run by Cornwallis; the British turned again, and the little body of Marylanders on the hill were in danger of being overwhelmed. Greene's horse was shot in the melee, and he was thrown to the ground, but he recovered himself instantly, remounted another,

and cheered on his men. But the difference in numbers began to tell against the Marylanders. They rallied on the guns, however, and with stern resolution held the position. Men met men breast to breast and thrust and hacked and beat and hewed at each other.

8

"OH, THE WILD CHARGE THEY MADE!"

"THE cavalry!" cried Greene, in the thick of the action. "Tell Washington——"

But that able soldier had already seen the peril. His men had enjoyed but little opportunity for fighting during the morning. They had sat their horses uneasily on the little acclivity on the left and watched the advance of the British. With hearts beating and eyes aflame, they lusted for the sound of the

charge. The horses, splendid specimens of Virginia's most famous breeds, shared the impatience of their riders. They flung their heads into the air and pawed the ground nervously and shook with excitement. The roar of the battle was music to them.

There was a time when they might have charged across the open with good effect, but Washington, with a soldier's eye, saw the supreme opportunity was not yet come. They were the only cavalry left in the American army, and they could not be thrown away. Lee's Legion was surrounded and bravely fighting a battle of its own off to the left. Washington must deliver his blow when it would prove the most telling. There would be time but for one opportunity, so he sat his horse like an iron statue and waited.

It takes courage to wait.

He saw the advance of the Highlanders

and the Guards; saw the ignominious retreat of the Second Maryland; saw Greene order the advance of the famous First Maryland; saw the volley and then that magnificent bayonet charge.

"Now! Now! Let us advance!" at last shrieked one of the young men in the ranks of the cavalry, overcome by uncontrollable excitement and enthusiasm.

"Silence in the ranks!" thundered Washington, never turning his head. Abashed by the reproof, the young soldier reined in his horse. Still, the time had not arrived, the Marylanders could take care of themselves. When the supports advanced he would strike, so Washington reasoned. Presently he saw the Guards give way before the furious Marylanders. Then he noticed the supports sent by Cornwallis coming forward on the run. Captain Baird, at the head of his troop of horse, thought he recognized the tall form of Sir

Francis Duane leading them. Back of them rode Cornwallis himself. Webster's shattered brigade had at last been reformed and was coming up the hill. A horseman broke from the melee on the crest and started toward Washington.

"Gentlemen," he cried, smiling with fierce pleasure, "I think now is our time. Attention! Draw sabres! Trot! March!"

A bugle-call rang over the field.

Keeping their horses well in hand, the cavalry started down the slope, deploying as they advanced. Leaping the little branch, or brook, the trot became a canter. Presently the canter broke into a gallop.

"Charge!" shouted Washington, urging his horse into a wild run. Waving their swords in the air, with every nerve tingling and every muscle tense with excitement, they struck the broken ranks of the Guards on the flank, scattered them like chaff be-

fore the wind, and plunged like a stone in a wave into the approaching British line.

The horsemen had spread out in obedience to the orders of their Colonel as they galloped, and in a long, thin line they struck the British, in spite of a scattering fire, with tremendous force. The crash of their meeting was heard all over the field. There was no time for the English to prepare to receive the charge with the bayonet. They heard the wild yelling of the men, the thunder of the hoofs on the ground; they caught a glimpse of maddened horses, white-faced men bending above them, bare and gleaming weapons—and the cavalry burst on them like a storm.

Sir Francis Duane, on horseback, threw himself in front of his troops and frantically called upon them to stand firm. In vain; the soldiers gave way before the terrible onset. Washington himself was in

the lead upon the right of the cavalry, Baird upon the left. The American Captain urged his horse toward Duane. The two met and crossed swords. A light of recognition shone in the eyes of each, although they said no word. Steel rang against steel as the blades gritted against each other. The advantage of the onset was with the American. He beat down the Englishman's guard and thrust violently at him. Sir Francis swerved, and the sword went through his arm. The next instant he was borne back in the rout. At the same time a bayonet thrust from the hand of some dying, desperate Highlander despatched Baird's horse, and a random bullet from the hill struck him in the body as he fell.

The unchecked cavalry sped on, cutting and slaughtering, the iron hoofs of the horses trampling the dead and wounded under foot in hideous and impartial horror.

As the men broke through the British lines on the other side, they swerved around to where General Greene sat on his horse on the hill-top.

"Well done, the horse!" he cried, with his eyes shining. "A splendid charge! You have saved us! Into it again! Take your men back once more, sir!" he shouted to Washington, pointing towards the British. "Forward, the First Maryland!"

This time there was no repulse. After a confused melee the British began to give ground and ran down the hill, closely followed by their pursuers. Unless their retreat could be stopped they would be lost. Cornwallis had a dreadful alternative before him, defeat or the destruction of his own men. He chose the latter, and opened with his artillery upon the men engaged in that hand-to-hand struggle, firing upon friend and foe alike. Presently the British fairly turned and ran from the hill, reform-

ing as they could upon their own guns, and leaving a clear space in front of them. The American advance was halted by the furious artillery fire from the British guns, and by Greene's orders they withdrew to the hill again.

Three horses had been shot from under Cornwallis in the engagement. His guns had killed many of his own troops, but had effected the salvation of his army. He had lost fearfully in the battle, his killed and wounded amounting to some six hundred, or one-fourth of his whole force. He still possessed, however, fifteen hundred excellent troops, who had done such fighting on that day as would immortalize them forever. Immediately the Earl began reforming them for a final attack.

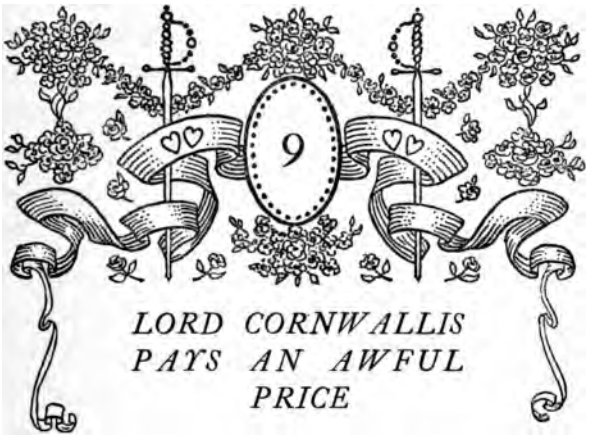
By the defection of the militia, the retreat of the Second Maryland, and many casualties, Greene's forces were now re-

duced to something like one thousand men. Stevens had not succeeded in reforming his men; Lee and his Legion had been cut off from the army and had not rejoined the main body. The Virginia Continentals had done well in the action, but they were not to be counted upon in the hand-to-hand fighting with which it was evident Cornwallis proposed to end the day. The First Maryland had suffered severely, though its morale and spirit were unbroken. They had fought gallantly, and so far honors were even. If the American army were destroyed, Cornwallis' end would be attained. If, however, Greene could preserve his Continental nucleus as a rallying-point, he might win the campaign, though he lost the day and yielded possession of the field. Should he stake the cause of the country upon one throw? Wisely, he determined to retreat.

Deploying the Virginia brigade as a rear-guard, he skilfully withdrew his troops from the battle-field, picking up the scattered First Maryland on the way and overtaking the Virginia militia as he marched. When he reached the rallying-point on the Haw River he fell from his horse in a dead faint. Cornwallis made practically no pursuit. Greene was forced to abandon his guns, as the horses had all been killed, and Cornwallis remained in possession of the field. He had won a technical victory, but at a fearful cost. Many of his best and bravest officers had been killed and a number severely wounded. The slaughter among the rank and file had been dreadful.

The day after the battle, abandoning the severely wounded to the Americans, Cornwallis, without baggage and supplies, gave up the field he had so gallantly contested and obtained, and began that march toward

the coast which threw him into the arms of Washington and de Rochambeau at Yorktown. Greene immediately reoccupied the field, and despatched Lee and Colonel Washington to harass the retreating British soldiery.



FROM the high porch of the old house on the hill back of the town the two young women had watched the varying course of the bitter struggle in front of the court-house. To the awful fascination of the battle were speedily added those intense and painful emotions of the heart which arose from the consciousness that the lives of the men they loved were in jeopardy on the field.

The statement is entirely accurate, for there was no doubt of the affection of Curtis Baird for Isabel, and the valiant effort Duane had made to cast from his heart the image of the mocking Sarah had been such an utter failure that he could no longer disguise his passion. As for that young lady, although she had not admitted even to herself hitherto the intensity with which she craved his affection, and would have returned it had she realized it had been bestowed upon her, yet under the touchstone of the imminent deadly peril to her lover in the combat, her heart was revealed. No one else, however, suspected this.

Isabel, although unwilling, with the peculiar compliance of that by-gone day—and it would have been nearly impossible to run counter to the influence and will of her father, in fact—had acquiesced in her betrothal to Sir Francis, but she could no more control her feelings under the circum-

stances in which she found herself than could her cousin.

So the blue eyes of the one girl followed the movements of the squadron of cavalry, and with the keenness of affection easily singled out the object of her devotion, sitting her own gray mare—he and the General had exchanged horses at his request, by the way, as they left the hall—at the head of his troop; while the black eyes of the other girl with as much eagerness scanned the advancing British lines, and presently were rewarded by the sight of the tall scarlet-clad figure of her hero, as he led the reserves to throw back the counter attack of the First Maryland.

The two girls, with the assistance of the Judge, who explained everything, eagerly followed the attack with sensations as vivid as they were painful. They saw the splendid charge of the cavalry, but in the dust and smoke of the melee, after the two

bodies of contestants mingled in the conflict, they lost sight of the two figures to which their attention had been so steadily given, and though they searched the field with intense glances during the cessation of the battle, while Cornwallis reformed his line within the shelter of the wood, they could detect neither the one nor the other.

The ground was dotted with bodies of the fallen, convulsive movements here and there proclaiming that life still continued in some of them. The red-coats lay like vivid gouts of blood upon the trampled sod, but there was not a few in faded blue and buff as well, and the light from the polished helmets scattered about showed that the cavalry had not come off scatheless.

Though the smoke had drifted up and away, a blue haze still hung over the hills, for the wind had been killed by the furious cannonade. Riderless horses were gallop-

ing aimlessly about over the scene of conflict, while others lay desperately wounded, adding shrill, uncanny screams of pain to the ghastly horrors of the occasion.

"I do not see him anywhere," remarked Isabel, in great anxiety.

"Nor I," added Sarah, striving to stifle her emotion, and referring, of course, to a different person.

"I have no doubt he is all right," said the Judge, consolingly. "The Americans would never dare——"

"I do not refer to Colonel Duane," interrupted Isabel, hastily. "And the Americans seem to have dared much yonder."

"But I do," muttered Sarah, under her breath.

"To whom, then?" asked the Judge, ignoring his daughter's last remark. "It cannot be possible that you still permit yourself to entertain feelings of—er—attachment toward that young American?"

"See, they are moving again!" cried Sarah, scanning the red line coming out of the wood. Isabel shot a glance of gratitude at her for diverting the attention of the Judge, who instantly turned his gaze toward the battle-field.

"Yes, yes!" he exclaimed, exultantly. "I thought it would be but a temporary reverse. Now we shall see——"

And see they did, for simultaneously with the British movements the withdrawal of the American troops began. There was a desultory skirmish between the British van and the American rear-guard, but it was evident that the battle was over.

"We have won!" cried the Judge. "God save the King! Providence has frowned upon rebellion since the Angels fell. A glorious day for our country!"

"Not for mine, sir!" said Isabel, firmly.

"Nor for mine!" added Sarah.

"And although we are retreating," Isabel continued, "I am sure we are not defeated. See the red men on the slope, and note how many are lying there, compared with the blue! General Greene told you that he could not lose his army, that a battle more or less meant nothing, but that an army lost meant the loss of the South. Father," she added, "I—we—must go down to the field! They—he—may be wounded—killed—there. I cannot bear it!"

"Who may be? To whom do you refer?" demanded the Judge, imperiously.

"To Sir Francis Duane, who else?" interrupted Sarah, again, anxious on her own account and to save her cousin. "He may be, as Isabel says, wounded or dying. Let us go!"

"A battle-field is no place for females," remarked the Judge, uncertainly; "still, I am so glad to see such evidences of affec-

tion on your part, Isabel, that I will have the carriage called and we will drive down at once."

A short time after, the carriage stopped near a brilliant group of officers who occupied the same hill upon which General Greene and his men had waited for news of the enemy early in the morning. As the Judge descended from the carriage, Cornwallis espied the two ladies and rode toward them, followed by his staff. They had met the previous winter at Charleston, and he was glad to renew their acquaintance. It was policy, too, to conciliate the people of the country so far as possible, and Judge Burton was certainly the most prominent and influential loyalist and Tory for miles around.

The Earl's brilliant scarlet uniform was soiled and stained. Three horses had been shot from under him during the battle, and he had come in contact rather heavily with

the earth on two occasions. When he burned the baggage of his army to facilitate the pursuit, he had not spared himself, and the two months' desperate campaigning had left its mark upon him as well.

He smiled politely as he gracefully saluted the ladies, though the effort he made to dispel the thoughtful sadness of his careworn face was a failure.

"I am happy," he remarked, "at being privileged to renew my acquaintance with the Misses Burton and Mr. Justice Burton, a loyal servant of the King."

"God bless him!" cried the Judge, lifting his hat. "I congratulate your Lordship upon a glorious victory! A splendid feat of arms, sir! We watched it from yonder house. Such fighting, I venture to say, has rarely been done by His Majesty's troops as on this day!"

"They have done well, but they met

their match, though," replied Cornwallis, "in that ragged Maryland regiment whose mettle we have tried, it seems to me, on every field on which we have engaged, from New York to North Carolina. As you say, sir, it was a glorious day for His Majesty's arms. The field is ours, but at what a cost! What a frightful cost!" he added, passing his hand over his brow and pointing out to the field. "Look yonder at the price we paid! Never saw I such fighting! In a hundred battles I never met with such resistance! See that heap of dead around those two guns! Another such victory would leave us undone, I fear, and yet we would have swept them all off the field had it not been for Washington's horse, which stopped Duane's advance by a brilliant charge. I had to open upon my own men to save the day," he cried, turning his face away as the recollection came back to him.

Isabel's eyes were roving over the field

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"I saw it, sir," said the Judge. "It was, indeed, a terrible alternative."

"A defeat meant annihilation, the loss of the South," said Cornwallis, gravely. "General O'Hara is wounded, Stewart and Webster killed, and hundreds of other brave men!" He sighed sadly.

"Sir Francis Duane, sir?" asked the Judge. "I do not see him."

"He went down under Washington's cavalry charge. He is out there with the rest. The surgeons are doing the best——"

"Hold, sir!" exclaimed the Judge, warningly. "He is the betrothed of——"

Cornwallis turned to the two young ladies in intense surprise. Isabel's eyes were still roving over the field. The statement of the Earl had made no impression upon her. Sarah, on the contrary, had turned deathly pale, and was leaning forward, her hand clutching the bosom of her

dress. As she heard the Earl's words, she sprang from the carriage and made her way down the hill. After a momentary hesitation Isabel followed her.

"Your pardon, Mr. Justice," said the Earl, quickly, "I was not aware of his relations to your niece."

"To my daughter, sir!" said the Judge, testily. "My niece has no interest whatever in Sir Francis save a cousinly one."

"Well, let us hope that they may find him all right," replied the mystified Cornwallis. "As for me, you will excuse me, I'm sure. I have pressing duties to attend to. Lieutenant Levison will go with you, and you have, of course, the freedom of the field."

Attended by the young Lieutenant from the British General's staff, Judge Burton walked down the hill in the direction the girls had taken.

10

AFTER THE BATTLE— HEARTS!

THE battle-field was a revolting scene. Nearly one thousand men in the short space of half an hour had fallen upon that little hill. The soft fresh grass of the morning was trampled and torn up in every direction. There were purple stains upon the turf other than the violets! The green field was covered with great, deep blotches where the blood of wounded soldiers had been poured upon it. The dead lay in

every conceivable position and with every possible expression upon their faces. Some looked as if they had fallen peacefully asleep. Others had torn up the sod in their death agony, and their white or blood-stained faces were turned up to the sky with such a look of terror and anguish fixed upon them as froze the blood.

Where the fighting had been hardest, around the abandoned gun-carriages, which were splashed with blood, bodies were piled in heaps. The course the cavalry had taken in the charge was marked by a broad trail thick with bodies, many of which had been trampled by the iron-shod hoofs of the horses with results too sickening to dwell upon.

In addition to the dead, the ground was covered with wounded, begging for water, moaning and shrieking in pain, or raving in fever. Among them the English surgeons were working heroically, doing what

they could for all that needed succor as they came upon them without regard to the uniform they wore. They were few in number, however, and the work was great.

The two girls had stopped on the edge of the field appalled by the harrowing situation. From the porch the hideous side of war had not been in evidence. There they had seen the glory and the splendor, the pomp and circumstance of it. Here they were brought face to face with the naked, stark, brutal truth of its hideous reality.

They gazed about them, white-faced and shrinking, but the consuming desire in their hearts constrained them to go on, and, overcoming their natural repugnance, they threaded their way over the field amid the dazed and delirious wounded. Isabel's eyes took no note of the red-coats, but scanned the men with the leather helmets; Sarah looked for another figure.

Bent upon differing purposes, unconsciously they separated, and Sarah made her way toward the edge of the wood. There under a tree, propped up against it, in fact, lay Sir Francis Duane. The surgeons had just left him. In addition to the sword-wound which Baird had given him, he had been shot in the back by the fire of the British guns when Cornwallis opened on the mass. He was not seriously hurt, however, and neither wound would require much time in healing. As Sarah caught sight of him she fairly fled to his side. She sank down on her knees by him and, clasping his unwounded hand, drew it to her breast.

"Oh!" she gasped, in a voice full of apprehension and anxiety, and in which her love for him would show itself, "I have found you! Tell me—tell me, where are you wounded?"

"You have forgiven me for my rude-

ness when I bade you good-by a month ago?" he asked, smiling reassuringly at her.

"But your wounds!" she pleaded; "tell me of them! Why trifle now under the circumstances?"

"They amount to nothing," he answered, before her compelling gaze; "a sword-cut in the arm, and a piece of shell in the—ah—ah—back."

"Back?" she cried. "Did you——"

"I did not, Miss Burton," he replied, with great dignity, discerning her thought; "it was a shot from our own guns."

"I am glad for that. And the sword-wound?"

"Your friend, Mr. Baird, presented me with that. My horse stumbled, or he——"

"Where is he? Know you aught of him?" she continued, eagerly.

"We came together in the thick of it," he answered, "when their horse swept down

on our flank, and he went down. Why do you ask? Are you interested in him?" he queried, jealously.

"I? Certainly, sir! I am seeking him."

"Oh! You saw the battle from the plantation yonder, did you?"

"Yes."

"And you followed the charge of the horse?"

"Certainly. Wasn't it splendid?"

"It was. Why are you seeking for him, then, over here on the edge of the wood, where the cavalry never went?" he questioned, keenly. She made no answer. "And was it for him that you turned pale and clasped my hand to your heart?" he added.

"No," she answered, brightly; "I will be honest with you. It was not for him."

His eyes sparkled with pleasure at this *naïve* admission.

"Ah! Was it for me, perhaps?" he asked.

"No; for Isabel."

"For Isabel!" he exclaimed. "I had fogotten her in your presence! In fact——"

"You forgot her broad acres, I suppose?"

"Damn her broad acres!" he shouted, passionately. "You exasperate——"

"Nice language for a soldier in the presence of a lady!" she answered. "But you are wounded, sick, and feverish. The heat of battle is on you, and I forgive you. You will be yourself later on and will remember. You owe me two apologies now, sir."

"Two?" he asked.

"Yes, one for your rudeness in the hall."

"I will pay it in the same coin," he said, recklessly.

"Fie, sir! And Isabel. Remember," she cried, lifting a finger again, the same

deliciously provoking little finger she had used so effectively once before, "that Isabel has the broad acres!"

He was quite as angry as he had been, but by a strong effort he regained control of himself, and after a moment asked,—

"Where is she now, I wonder? Did you come here alone?"

"She is seeking you," Sarah answered, most untruthfully, "in another part of the field. I will go and fetch her."

Sir Francis lifted himself on his unwounded arm and turned toward the hill.

"You will find her over there where Baird fell," he said.

"Very well," she said, turning away.

"Will you come back to me?" he called after her.

"With Isabel?" she called back.

"With anybody, so you come!" he added, desperately.

It had not taken Isabel long to find the

object of her search. Right on the edge of the place where the cavalry had made their attack on the infantry she discovered him. Her heart almost stopped beating when she saw him. He was desperately wounded, and moaning pitifully. No surgeon had yet reached him. She must do something for him herself, lest he die and she with him.

A canteen belonging to a dead soldier lay near her. With eager hands she drew the cork and bathed his face with the precious fluid. Then, lifting his head, she poured a little down his throat. With still heart she watched him. His eyes opened, he started, stared vacantly a moment, and then recognition came.

"You here!" he murmured, weakly; and with recognition came recollection. "You will find Colonel Duane back by the wood, I do not think much hurt," he added, wearily.

"I did not come to seek Sir Francis," she answered, softly, taking his hand in her own, joy in his recognition of her showing itself in the color returning to her face, "but you."

"Me!" he cried, in surprise; and even in his weakness the pleasure in his face was apparent also.

"Tell me," she went on, anxiously, "are you badly wounded? Do you suffer? Can I do anything?"

"I am done for this time, I fear. It was a glorious fight! Don't marry Duane. I—I—I love you! Form up, gentlemen!" he cried, lifting himself. "Ready! Charge!"

He sank back in her arms.

Judge Burton and Sarah found her staring, dry-eyed and silent, at his motionless figure.

"Sir Francis is in the wood yonder," said Sarah, laying her hand upon Isabel's shoulder. "He would fain see you——"

"Ready! Charge!"

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"I cannot go," she whispered; "I cannot leave him here! I care not if Sir Francis lives or dies! My heart is here!" she cried, wildly, sinking prone upon the sod.

The next day Cornwallis, leaving his own more seriously wounded to the merciful care of the American commander, abandoned the stricken field and began that march toward the coast which ended at Yorktown. Common humanity and old acquaintanceship compelled Judge Burton to accede to Isabel's demand, and Captain Baird was tenderly raised and carried to the old manor house on the hill, where he received every attention. He remained unconscious for days.

Long before he came to his senses Colonel Duane, who had enjoyed the same hospitable shelter, had recovered from his lighter wounds and had gone away in pursuance of his duties. Cornwallis had at-

tached him to the staff of Lord Rawdon, who had been left in command in the Carolinas. Rawdon had given him charge of a legion of horse with a roving commission.

His love-affairs were in as tangled a state as his financial condition. Isabel's love for Baird was no longer a secret, and his own infatuation for Sarah was stronger with every moment, yet, with manlike jealousy, he hated Baird and clung tenaciously to his engagement with Isabel, while he nursed the love in his heart for Sarah. Both girls were fearfully unhappy, so were both men.

So matters drifted on until Captain Baird grew stronger and was able to resume his duties. So far as the Judge was concerned, he had been from the first an unwelcome guest, and the old man made no secret of his gratification over his departure. He had prevented as far as possible any inter-

course between his daughter and the young American.

The horse Isabel had lent to Baird having been killed, she insisted that he take his own, which he had left with her. He had naturally demurred, but when she pleaded for permission to make the gift for the sake of her country and the cause they adored, he had acceded to her request. The morning of his departure—the Judge being by chance absent—had been spent in unavailing pleas to make her refuse obedience to her father and break her engagement.

"While I am a free agent," she had said, with curious contradiction, "I must obey my father and keep my word."

He caught at the chance implied in her words.

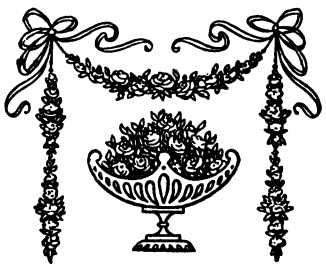
"Free agent?" he cried. "And if you are not, what then?"

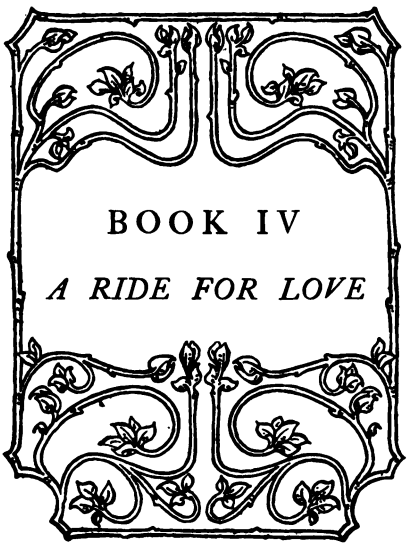
"Why, then, I suppose," she answered,

slowly, "then I should be compelled to do as my captor—but why speak of it?" she said, sadly.

"You give me a hope!" he cried, buoyantly, kissing her hand, and then as he slowly climbed into the saddle, his weak condition permitting no more rapid movement, he bent low before her and said, boldly, "I shall have you if I have to tear you from his arms at the altar!"

"I shall take good care," cried the Judge, wrathfully, coming around the corner of the house, having overheard the last remark, "that you shall have no such opportunity afforded you!"





BOOK IV

A RIDE FOR LOVE

II

A GRIM MATCH-MAKER

A MONTH later and the sunlight of summer was flooding the land. Two men were standing in a by-road under the shadow of a great cliff which rose abruptly by the side of them, and one was intently listening to the other. Their horses, which each held by the bridle, were quietly cropping the grass behind them. The place where they stood was the intersection of two roads nearly at right angles. The

country was mountainous and broken, and both roads were crooked. One was a rather well-travelled highway which wound around the hills, and just before it reached the spot where the horsemen were standing sprung in an abrupt curve around the mass of rock and trees which concealed the two men from any approaching party in that direction. The other was a mere bridle-path which lost itself in a dense wood a few hundred feet away.

Along the main road, perhaps half a mile from the cross-roads, a little party of eight or ten horsemen, evidently belonging to the British light cavalry, led by a tall, distinguished young officer, brilliantly uniformed and mounted on a splendid bay horse, were escorting a richly dressed old man and a charming young woman. When her blue riding-cloak was blown back by the wind or lifted by the motion of the horse, the fact was disclosed that she

was in bridal array. In spite of the gay bodice with its pale pink lacings and the looped paniers of blue over the quilted white satin petticoat, short enough to reveal a ravishing bit of clocked stocking and tiny buckled shoes, she looked anything rather than a bride; for the hopeless rebellion in her frowning face belied the gayety of her attire.

The two men behind the bluff were an American officer and a soldier wearing the chevrons of a sergeant. Their uniforms proclaimed that they belonged to Washington's cavalry. One, the Sergeant, a grim and grizzled veteran, had evidently been watching the road from the brow of the cliff, for as he stood he brushed away the earth and twigs which had clung to his person as he came sliding down it.

"They're a-comin', sir," he said to the other, who had apparently just ridden up.

"I sh'd jedge they're 'bout a half a mile from here."

"How many are they?"

"'Bout a dozen on 'em, all told, sir."

"And the old man? Is he with them?"

"Yes, sir. There's an officer leadin', an' on his right hand a young female, an' next to him an ole man in plain close, an' then some sojurs. There's no one in front of th' officer an' the young woman."

"You have good eyes, Sergeant."

"Yes, sir."

"They do not appear to suspect anything, then?"

"Nothin' at all, sir. They're all jist a-ridin' careless like, th' officer an' the young lady an' th' ole man together, an' t'others in a bunch some ways behind."

"That is well," said the officer. "Now you know our plans. As I said, I intend to dash in between the officer and the lady

just as they pass the cliffs here. As they are riding along so unsuspiciously I do not wish to kill the officer,—and there are other reasons besides,—so I shall shoot his horse. Then I shall grasp the bridle of the lady's horse and gallop down the cross-road. You will be on my left side, and I depend upon you to keep off the soldiers in the rear."

"Am I to look out fer the whole lot on 'em?"

"The whole lot, of course!" answered the officer, sharply; "that's why I brought you with me, sir."

"Yes, sir, I think I'll be ekal to it," remarked the Sergeant, calmly. "I s'pose you'll have nary objections to my shootin' to kill?"

"None whatever. They are our enemies, and every one less means so much gained. But you must not shoot the officer."

"Ain't th' officer our enemy too, sir?"

"Yes, of course, but I have reasons, and——"

"All right, sir, your orders goes; an' arter we git away, wot then, sir?"

"Then we shall gallop down the path, and you will cover the escape of the young lady. We shall get a good start of them, and they will be so surprised and confused by the suddenness of the attack that they won't realize there are only two of us, and I hope to gain the shelter of the wood before they begin to pursue. The path turns sharply, I remember, and winds around until it comes to the creek. As the creek is too deep to ford and the sides too rocky to jump, the only crossing is on the bridge."

"You expect me to hold that 'ere bridge?"

"I do. I must get the young lady to safety at all hazards, or I would stay with

you. It is not a duty I would lay upon you, but——"

"I've volunteered, sir," said the Sergeant, bluntly, "an' that's all there is about it. It's a desprit chance, but that's the sort of thing I like. I s'pose you have no objections to my shootin' to kill there either?"

"Certainly not, as I told you before. If you must shoot, always shoot to kill."

"'Ceptin', you don't want me to hurt th' officer?"

"On no account injure him. Information of this journey was given me by a young lady in this letter," said the officer, taking a note from his pocket, "and I promised her, at her request, through her messenger, that no harm should befall Colonel Duane. I might as well be frank with you, Sergeant Dade. You see, I—I—I am in love with this young lady——"

"The one that writ this letter?" asked this strange recipient of lovers' confidences.

"No, certainly not! The one that is to marry Colonel Duane!"

"Wot's she goin' to marry him fer, sir, w'en you're in love with her?" he asked, simply.

It did not seem to enter the old Sergeant's mind that any woman on earth could fail to love his handsome Captain, whom he himself adored.

"Well, it does not follow that she is in love with me on that account," answered Baird, smiling, "although it happens to be true in this instance—at least I think so. The young lady is forced into the marriage with Colonel Duane by her father."

"An' w'y don't t'other young lady want the Colonel hurt, sir?"

"Because she is in love with him, I think," Baird answered.

"Wot does he think about it all?"

"I don't know and I don't care!" said Baird; "but I have an idea that he is in love with the writer of the letter."

"An' goin' to marry t'other woman! That beats all, sir! Howsomever, I understand, an' I'm ready to play my part in the game. Seems like I'm goin' to be a sort of a match-maker 'twixt you an' the lady, don't it? Well, this yere lovin' business is beyond me. I never was mixed up in a love-affair afore, but you can count on me, sir."

"I know I can," answered the young man, putting out his hand; "that is why I selected you as my companion."

"If anything happens to me you'll look arter my ole mother, won't you?" the old soldier asked, as he took his officer's hand and shook it warmly.

"I will," answered Baird, solemnly, "so help me God! I feel like a coward to bring

you here and drag you into this thing. It's awfully selfish," he continued.

"Love is allus selfish, sir, they says as has it; as fer me, I don't know nothin' about it," commented the Sergeant, smiling; "but don't you worry about me. I don't often git a chanst at ten red-coats all in a bunch. Sich an opportunity fer fightin' don't come any too frequent, sir, an' I rejoices at it."

"You are a queer fellow, Dade," said Baird, "and if there were more like you we would get our freedom in short order. Now, we would better get ready. Look sharp at your pistols, and see that your sword hangs loose in its scabbard and that your rifle is handy."

"My weepons is allus in order, sir," remarked the Sergeant, as the two, after a brief examination, sprang to their saddles.

"Jist one more thing, sir," queried the Sergeant. "W'ere are you goin' to take

the young lady, if I mout be so bold as to ax?"

"Back to Overbrook."

"Wot! back to her own father's plantation, sir?"

"Yes. I intend to capture the place. He is a Tory, you know, and she will feel more at home there, and it is the most defensible position for miles around. I sent a messenger to Colonel Washington asking him to lend me a half-dozen of the troop, and I told them to meet me there. I gave them orders, in fact, to go in and occupy the place, which will probably be left undefended. They will find Miss Sarah Burton there."

"Oh, the young lady that writ the note?"

"Yes. Of course, Colonel Duane will pursue us and try to take the place and get his bride back again, but as he has no artillery we ought to be able to hold it indefi-

nitely, at least until General Greene comes down with the main army; always provided there are provisions enough in the store-house."

"I see," remarked Sergeant Dade, sapiently, "an' so fer as I git an idea you're goin' to begin a campaign in a small way."

"Stand a siege, rather," replied the Captain, smiling.

"An' I'm to git back to you there if I git out of the fight alive, am I?"

"You are," replied Baird. "Don't get captured if you can help it. They are none too particular, and might hang you."

"Trust me fer that, sir; but they'd ought to be due now, an' I ventur' to suggest, sir, that we ride down under that 'ere clump of trees clost by to the rock. They'll have to pass within three feet of us there, an' we can do the job up easy."

"A good suggestion!" said Baird, moving his horse over to the designated point.

12

YOUNG LOCHINVAR

THE cross-road, or trail, which was not much more than a bridle-path, dropped straight as an arrow down the hill for about a hundred yards before it entered the wood, and then turned sharply to the right. Baird counted upon gaining the shelter of the trees before the pursuit began, and then he trusted to the efforts of the Sergeant to delay the Englishmen and to the speed of their horses, hoping that Isabel would be

well mounted, as was likely, to enable them to get away. They had but a few moments to wait before they heard the trampling of the horses on the hard road.

A last glance at the pistol which each man carried in his right hand, a gathering up of the reins, a tighter grip of the knees, a firmer seat in the saddle, a word to the horses—and Colonel Duane, with Isabel Burton riding at his left side and slightly in his rear, came around the cliff. The Colonel looked very unlike a bridegroom on the way to his wedding. A deep frown marked his handsome face, and he gazed moodily forward, inclining his glance neither to the right nor to the left. Isabel, pale and listless, followed along as a slave might in the train of a master. The Judge, riding next them, alone endeavored to assume the cheerfulness naturally attendant upon the circumstances.

Duane had scarcely drawn past the cliffs when the waiting horsemen were upon him. There was a flash and a report from Baird's pistol, and the handsome bay horse Sir Francis was riding sprang forward, staggered, and fell, throwing his rider heavily. The American was on the party like the wind.

"Isabel!" he cried, in answer to her scream of terror, at the same time seizing the bridle-rein of her horse and turning his head violently down the path. "Hold fast and ride hard!" he shouted, as both horses broke into a rapid gallop which soon became a wild run.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Dade had not been idle. Riding a heavy, powerful troop-horse, he sprang forward and dashed into the Judge, whose horse reared, threw the Jurist, and then bolted down the road. The first man of the escort was shot dead, point-blank, by the Sergeant; smashing the face of another with the butt of his empty

pistol, he shouted at the same time, "Come on men!" as if leading an army, thereby throwing the whole band into consternation. In their confusion they fell back in a huddle in the road. Before they realized that there were but two men party to the bold attack, Dade tore down the path after the two, who were already entering the wood.

Sir Francis scrambled to his feet instantly. Disregarding the Judge's furious comments, he bade the nearest trooper dismount from his horse and look after his fallen comrade, and, calling upon the others to follow, galloped recklessly down the road after the fleeing trio, who, having gained a long start, had already disappeared.

"Oh, what mean you? What is it you would do?" cried Isabel, in astonishment and terror, as her horse raced gallantly on by the side of Baird's galloping steed, after

they had reached the cover of the forest and were screened from their pursuers by the winding of the path.

"Prevent your marriage!" he cried, exultingly. "Take you by force! Break your vows upon compulsion! Marry you myself, and have you for my own—my own!"

"And I am your——"

"My prisoner," he answered, boldly, "and I am yours. Oh, Isabel, the happiness of this moment!"

A flush of excitement had succeeded the pallor in her cheeks. No longer listless in the saddle, she sat her horse with the grace and ease of the accomplished horsewoman. Her eyes sparkled with hope, relief, and love. The rapid motion filled her with elation. As they galloped along she shot a furtive look of burning affection toward her bold and handsome lover. He had saved her—he was taking

her away! Joy! She would be free of all bondage except that of her heart.

"You may take your hand from the bridle, Captain Baird," she said at last, breaking the silence, while skimming over the ground on her horse like a swallow. She flashed a brilliant smile at him as she spoke.

"Isabel!" he cried, in alarm, "you would not return? You do not blame me for what I have done? I heard that to-day was set for your wedding; that you were to pass by on the road to the church; that there would be but few in your escort. I swore, you remember, that I would take you from him even at the foot of the altar. You cannot blame me, Isabel! You, yourself, are my excuse!"

"Have I blamed you yet, sir?" asked Isabel, demurely.

Her cloak had fallen away, and she looked like a pink-and-white flower blown

Like a pink-and-white flower

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along by a driving wind. The tree-trunks raced past them as they rode on in this strange love-making.

"Why command me to release the bridle, then?"

"Of what avail is that, sir? You—you hold me by a stronger tie than leather and steel."

"Oh, Isabel!" he cried, checking his horse and hers at the same time, reckless of the pursuit; "do you indeed care?"

The two horses sank into a walk.

"Care!" she murmured; "I am your prisoner."

"Prisoner of my arm?" he queried, bending toward her, his soul in his eyes.

"The prisoner of your heart," she whispered.

The horses stopped. It was deadly still in the quiet wood. The pursuit seemed far away. They were alone. His arm stole around her waist. All unresisting,

her lovely head fell on his shoulder. For the first time in his life he kissed her. All his soul went forth to meet her perfect lips.

"Oh, Curtis!" she said, trembling, abandoning herself to his passionate caress, "thank God, you have saved me!"

"And you are mine?" he whispered.

"Yes! Yes! Forever!" she murmured.

Silence!

Far back in the road behind them a pistol-shot rang out.

"We lose time," she said, on the instant awake to their danger, a note of terrified apprehension in her voice. "We are pursued! We shall be overtaken—captured!"

"Forward, then!" answered Baird, joyously, starting the horses once more.

"How imprudent of you," she cried, urging her horse forward, "to have stopped for this, and risked all you have gained!"

"It was foolish," he called to her, "but

I couldn't help it. I'm not sorry. They can't catch us. Let us on."

"That pistol-shot? Were you alone?" she asked.

"No; one of my men was with me. 'Tis he covering our retreat."

"A brave fellow! And can you trust him?"

"To the death."

"And where do you take me?"

"Back to Overbrook."

"To my own home, Captain Baird?" she exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes, there. Your father is a Tory; he is for the King. We take the place, we hold it. I hold you as well. Sir Francis besieges it, we hold it until we are relieved."

"Father will be furious," she responded, dubiously.

"No doubt; he is probably furious now," remarked Baird, lightly. "And this last is

but an added detail. At any rate, I promised Miss Sarah——"

"Sarah!" cried Isabel. "What has she to do with it?"

"She gave me the information."

"The little traitor!" she exclaimed, inconsequently.

"Traitor! Are you not glad?"

"Yes, yes, of course. But why did she do it?"

"I think I know," answered Baird, smiling.

"Why, then?"

"She loves Duane."

"Oh," exclaimed Isabel, "that would explain it! Why in Heaven's name does she not marry him, then?"

"Because he hasn't asked her, I suppose," answered the Captain.

"And why didn't he ask her, I wonder? —he never loved me."

"Isabel, it is not possible for any one to

see you and not love you," he replied, fatuously. "I am sure he adores you."

"If that were true it would be a poor lookout for you, sir. It was my father's property he wanted."

"If that be so," said Baird, "let us give it to Sarah. I have enough and to spare. I have taken you just as you are."

"What makes you think she cares for him?" she asked, curiously. "I can't believe it."

"From her letter, in which she made me promise not to harm him. I have it here," he answered, searching his pocket. "No, I must have dropped it. But no matter. She bade me bring you there, and she said she would have the rector of the parish there, so that we——"

"Oh, Curtis, I could not!" she exclaimed, blushing happily.

"You must!" he replied, with military

decision, and then another shot rang out and still another.

"He is there yet," said Baird; "but those shots were nearer. We must go faster. Put your spur into your horse."

"My horse is not as good an animal as yours; he is doing his best now," she said, nevertheless inciting it to further effort. Presently the bridge came into view. They galloped over it and turned toward the right. The two weary horses swept rapidly down the open road.

"It is but a short run to Overbrook," he cried. "Dade will hold them in play at the bridge."

Back in the woods, riding furiously with the skill of an accomplished horseman, Duane, far ahead of his troopers, gradually overhauled the flying Sergeant. Drawing his pistol and looking back over his shoulder, the Sergeant marked how recklessly he came on and how fair a mark he presented.

Murder was in the soldier's heart, and he could have killed the Englishman cheerfully, but the habit of obedience prevailed, and suddenly reining in his horse, he wheeled abruptly, took quick aim, and shot the Colonel's horse. In another second the American was away again. But the slight delay had enabled the soldiers to close with their officer. Seizing unerringly the best horse from the remaining troopers, Sir Francis sprang upon him and once more headed the pursuit. At the Colonel's command the soldiers opened fire upon the Sergeant wherever the winding road gave them a glimpse of him. The view-halloo and the crackling of arms resounded through the woods as they swept on. Presently the Sergeant came to the creek. The road was straight here, and just as he entered upon the narrow bridge a shot from one of the soldiers dropped his horse. He leaped from it as it fell, snatched his rifle

from his back, dropped on his face behind the dead horse, and took careful aim. He would not waste a shot on a horse again.

Sir Francis Duane was leading the pursuit, as before. Dade could have easily killed him, but again, with the instinct of obedience strong upon him, he aimed at the second horseman, the rifle cracked, and the man fell. To spring to his feet and whip out his sword was the work of a moment for the Sergeant. The pieces of the British had been discharged and they had no time to reload them. There was no firing, therefore, and the six men left swooped down upon him like a storm. Sir Francis thrust his sword through the Sergeant's arm, his horse struck him in the body and hurled him violently over the bridge into the creek. They thundered across the bridge and the way was open.

LOVE ON THE SADDLE-BOW

AS the pursuers left the bridge, far down the straight, open road they saw the fugitives. One horse, apparently, had been abandoned by the roadside. The man and woman were both mounted upon Baird's big black. The abandoned animal, as it cropped the grass with drooping head, limped painfully.

"Her horse has gone lame, men," cried Duane, triumphantly, "and the other

horse is carrying double. We have them now!"

His face was aflame with the passion of the hunt, for of all the games in which men exult, nothing so gripes the heart and soul as a man-hunt—a love-chase is not to be compared with it, for that is only a woman-hunt. It is difficult to say whether Duane's desire was so much for Isabel as it was for the man who so boldly interposed between him and his bride. It was Baird he wanted, for he had surmised who the interloper was, and he wanted to kill him. It was now the instinct of fight rather than that of love that bubbled and seethed in his breast; and the wild, hot-blooded desire to kill, to bring down the quarry at all hazards, filled his soul. The wild gallop, the mad chase, had brought the original man to the surface, and he rode a dangerous and reckless horseman.

Each leap of the horse brought him

nearer to his great desire. The landscape swept by him with the speed of the flying wind. His breath came harder, his face burned as he leaned forward over the saddle and swept on. His horse was heaving and panting, his eyes were rolling with excitement, his distended nostrils looked like pits of blood, under the tremendous force with which he was driven forward. Never had he been so ridden before. The determination of the man had been communicated to the beast, and though he was but a common troop-horse, it was certain he would gallop on until he died. By some paradox the mighty grip of his rider's knees fairly seemed to lift him into the air as he raced forward, drawing ever nearer the flying pair of lovers. It was noble horsemanship.

Meanwhile, the two ahead were galloping for dear life down the road. As Duane had surmised, about half a mile from the

bridge Isabel's horse had gone lame. There was no alternative, and Baird had lifted her to the saddle in front of him. He held her slight form tightly against his own with one powerful arm thrown around her slender waist. Her glorious hair, loosed from its fastenings by the rapid motion, streamed backward over his shoulder like a golden flag. At his entreaty she slipped her arm around his neck and clung tightly to him as they swayed together with the rise and fall of the horse. Erebus,—so Baird had named him,—a splendid Virginia thoroughbred, responded gamely to the double burden by renewed effort. With scarcely a diminution in his gait the great stallion swept on, in spite of the heart-breaking tax upon his powers.

"On, Erebus, on!" cried Baird, brokenly; then, addressing Isabel and the horse alternately, "'Tis heavenly so to hold you!—Keep it up, old friend!—With you before

me I could ride forever!—Well done, you black rascal!—To feel your arms about me thus.—Oh, don't fail us now, Erebus!—I love you.—Will you be beaten by a common troop-horse?—Hold tight, my dearest. —On, on!"

"They gain upon us!" cried Isabel, looking back over his shoulder.

"Who leads?" asked Baird, urging Erebus forward again.

"Sir Francis."

"And the rest?"

"Some distance behind, but coming on."

"The hill is before us," cried Baird. "If Erebus can stand this fearful pace for five minutes longer we shall be safe."

He called again and again to the horse, who responded with all the breeding of his hundred noble sires. The effort he was making was tremendous. The animal's heart beat as if it would burst, but he never faltered in his steady stride. He was as

game as his master as he ran along the road, panting, foam-flecked, dying!

"Sir Francis has drawn his pistol!" cried Isabel.

"Don't look!" cried Baird, in alarm. "Put your head in front of me!"

But Isabel refused to obey.

"He is pointing it at us!" she exclaimed, a note of terror in her voice.

"He won't dare fire at us! There is no danger to you, I think," said Baird, reassuringly; "he will aim at the horse.—On, Erebus! on, old boy!—A few moments, and we are safe! There is the hill, and, thank God! the stars and stripes are flying over the house! My men are in possession!—Erebus, for God's sake, old horse, another effort!" He shook the reins out over the black stallion's neck with his free hand, leaned forward as best he could, patted him, called to him, prayed to him, put the spur into him at last until blood

mingled with the sweat on his flanks. And the horse, with human intelligence and more than human will, shook his head upward and responded with all his blood and soul.

"He fires! he fires!" cried Isabel, as the crack of a pistol showed that Sir Francis had taken a desperate chance and fired at the horse.

But Duane's steed was beginning to fail. He had no blood behind him. The common trooper had galloped along like the thoroughbred, but he was done for now. He was reeling and wavering in the road like a drunken man. Only Sir Francis' indomitable will had held him up so far. Fortunately, as Sir Francis fired Erebus swerved slightly, and the bullet only grazed his flank. He fairly bounded forward, and with renewed impetus began to breast the hill. His violent motion almost unseated the riders, but Baird, calling to Isabel to

hold fast, recovered himself and clung on.

"Sir Francis' horse is down!" cried Isabel. "He runs along on foot! He comes as fast as we! The others are coming up!"

"One more effort, old friend," cried Baird, "and we are in!"

As he spoke the crack of a rifle rang out from the stockade around the old house at the top of the hill, and then another and another. The British troopers halted around their dismounted Colonel. With a last weary bound black Erebus gained the entrance and stood panting, trembling, and exhausted. They entered. The gate was shut. They were safe!

The little band of Americans clustered about the group and cheered wildly. Setting Isabel upon the ground, Baird leaped from the saddle. Isabel stood for a moment, threw her arms around the neck of

the horse, and kissed his face, shrieking, hysterically,—

"We are saved! We are saved! Thank God, and you, brave horse!"

As she released him she fell back fainting into the arms of Sarah, who had run to the gate to meet them. And the horse, his duty done, with one last, fiery glance at Baird, slowly sank to the ground before them.

Out on the road Sir Francis Duane shook his fist at the stockade, and, trembling with passion, cried, hoarsely,—

"I shall have you yet! I shall have you yet!"

14

WITHIN THE STOCKADE

IN compliance with Baird's request, Colonel Washington had despatched a dozen troopers under Cornet Hale, who promptly seized upon Overbrook, bereft of its defenders. The stockade had been completed since the night of General Greene's visit, and the place, seated on the brow of the hill overlooking the river, could easily be held against any force unprovided with artillery.

In fact, it was decidedly unsafe for people to live in undefended houses at that period in North Carolina, for the so-called neutral ground between the lines of the contending forces was swept by raiding parties from one army or the other and by bands of certain loose characters of the baser sort, who took advantage of the unsettled condition to prey upon their own account. As Judge Burton's duties at that season of the year kept him in that section of the country, he had completed the fortification.

Inside the stockade all was confusion for the moment. Baird saw Isabel faint with all a lover's anxiety and alarm. Sarah reassured him, however, and in any event it was impossible for him to pay much attention to her then.

Bidding a soldier care for his exhausted horse, who seemed to be recovering under the stimulus of a bottle of the Judge's oldest wine, he turned his gaze toward the

road. Down in the valley at the foot of the hill the little party of British troopers had halted around Sir Francis and his dead horse. All told, they numbered six. It would be a brilliant move if Baird could capture the party. He would have bride and bridegroom both in his possession then.

Detailing four men to hold the stockade, he summoned eight others and bade them get their horses and prepare to move down the hill. The British should be an easy prey, their horses being spent from their hard ride, while those of the Americans were fresh, and though they would undoubtedly put up a stiff fight under Sir Francis' bold leadership, the weight of numbers would unfailingly determine the issue. The Americans were clamorous to be allowed to make the sortie. In no part of the rebellious colonies were animosities so bitter and hatreds so great as those that had been engendered in the Carolinas; so

they sprang to their horses with alacrity, and, looking carefully to their arms, passed through the gate and trotted down the hill.

As soon as they became aware of the movements of the Americans the British moved over and took position behind a road-side fence. They were evidently preparing for a desperate struggle; but before Baird's little party had reached the foot of the hill, the front rank of a large party of horseman came out from the cover of the trees on the road which led across the bridge. There was nothing left for the disappointed Americans but to beat a hasty retreat to the stockade.

The approaching troops proved to be the balance of Sir Francis' roving command of horse, numbering, all told, perhaps a hundred men. Sir Francis had ridden on ahead of them that morning to celebrate his wedding, and had directed

them to meet him in the evening at Overbrook. Their fortunate arrival undoubtedly saved him from capture. As he was preparing, shortly after his wedding, to start upon an extended raid,—something in the nature of a small campaign, in fact,—the troopers were accompanied by baggage-wagons with tents and provisions. As luck would have it, however, they did not have a single piece of artillery. The men, as they came up, were at once disposed about the foot of the hill out of musket-range, and Sir Francis proceeded to invest the place.

The stockade was composed of the trunks of trees placed close together and standing about ten feet above the earth. It enclosed perhaps an acre of ground on the very top of the hill. Inside the palisade the earth had been heaped up against the tree-trunks, forming a banquette sufficiently high to enable a soldier to cover

the slope with his musket through the interspaces which had been cut in the logs. On the outside, toward the road, there was a shallow ditch, which made it more difficult to attack it.

To defend this place Baird had a young cornet of dragoons, twelve troopers, two women, the Rev. Dr. Forsyth, the rector of the nearest parish church, and ten slaves, household servants, of whom six were women. There was a deep well within the enclosure, so that plenty of water was available, but, unfortunately, scarcely one week's provision for man or beast. Weapons, in addition to those carried by the troopers, there were in plenty, with ammunition as well. The position was practically unassailable on those sides which were protected by the deep bluffs overhanging the river.

Baird felt confident of holding the place indefinitely unless starved out. If he did

not report to Colonel Washington with the troopers in a few days, it was possible that search would be made for him, and that he might be rescued. So he hoped. On the other hand, he could not disguise the fact that Washington might be despatched for hundreds of miles on some raid, and his absence would remain unnoticed for weeks. The future, therefore, was problematical. The duty of the present was plain. He must hold the place at all hazards and wait his adversary's move. Indeed, he was too weak to do anything more than that.

He did not have long to wait. Having properly disposed of his troopers, the wildly impatient Duane, ignorant of the force of the besiegers and desiring to test their strength and resolution, imprudently ordered an immediate attack. He had scarcely recovered his equanimity, and in the indignation and passion which had

been engendered by the bold onset and the bitter pursuit he was hardly master of himself, else he would not have made so foolish an attempt.

The attack was skilfully and gallantly made. The men crawled up the little hill until within striking distance, and then rose and made a rush for the stockade. They were met by a slow and careful fire from the Americans, and though the British reached the wooden wall they could neither surmount it nor tear it down, and they were forced to retreat, leaving a half dozen dead men on the grassy slopes. Chafing at this further repulse, Sir Francis at last realized that he, too, could do nothing for the present but wait. Posting his sentries, therefore, he ordered the tents pitched and a regular encampment to be constructed.

On the inside of the stockade Baird divided his little band into two parties, putting one under the command of the

Cornet and taking charge of the other himself. The two parties were to stand guard after the manner of a ship's crew, watch and watch. Appointing the Cornet's party to the first tour of duty, and instructing them to keep careful guard, Baird withdrew to the house.

"FANTASTIC AS A WOMAN'S MOOD"

ASSISTED by some of the negro slaves, who came at her call, Sarah had carried Isabel within-doors, where the application of a few simple restoratives soon brought her to consciousness, if not to calmness, again. When the two girls were alone, Isabel threw herself into the arms of her cousin.

"Oh, Sarah!" she cried, hysterically, "how could you do such a thing? I am so happy! It was shocking!—shocking!

I shall never forgive you! Isn't he magnificent! He seized me in his arms when my horse went lame, and—and—actually carried me through the air! I never was so miserable in my life! What will father say? And oh, he loves me so! I—I never dreamed of such a thing! Why, he stopped in the middle of the pursuit to—to—Sarah, how unmaidenly of you to write that letter; as if I wanted, or I—didn't want——"

"Well, did you or did you not?" asked Sarah, smiling.

"Did I, or didn't I what?"

"Did you want to marry Sir Francis? Didn't you want to marry Curtis Baird?"

"I didn't want to marry anybody!" cried Isabel, fitfully. "I—I—never was so treated in my life! He says that I started out to get married to-day, and—and—there is going to be a wedding any-

way! He said there was a clergyman here and——"

"There is," said Sarah: "Dr. Forsyth is here. I sent for him."

"You! Oh, Sarah, how could you! I can't do it! I—I—haven't any clothes," she went on, inconsequently.

"Clothes! Why, you are wearing a wedding-dress now, and——"

"Oh, Sarah, 'tis so rumpled——"

"Your wardrobe is full of clothes. That's why I told him to bring you back here. You have to do it, Isabel!" said her cousin, decisively. "I am afraid Sir Francis is bound to capture this place, and then, unless you are married, you are lost!"

"Oh, Sarah, I cannot!"

"Then you might as well make up your mind to become Lady Duane," returned Sarah, coldly.

"I can't do that either! What shall I do?"

"Marry Curtis Baird!" responded Sarah, promptly. "If the man I love had carried me off and taken me prisoner and wanted to marry me, I—I'd do it at once!"

"Then you do love some one, Sarah? Oh, you dear! Tell me who it is?"

"I love no one, Isabel."

"What did you do all this for, then? Was it for my happiness alone?"

"No—no—not exactly," answered Sarah, reluctantly.

"For whom, then?"

"For Sir Francis Duane."

"Oh!" exclaimed Isabel, with a touch of hauteur; "you think he would not be happy with me, then?"

"Not if you did not love him, Isabel," answered Sarah, bravely; "but—but——"

"But what?"

"Nothing. Don't let's talk about Sir Francis, he is out of it now. Let's talk of your wedding."

"Dr. Forsyth won't marry me without father's consent," said Isabel, weakly, conceding the main point.

"Yes, he will. I have arranged all that," answered Sarah, boldly. "You are of age. Dr. Forsyth is an American through and through, and he would like nothing better than to marry you to an American officer like Captain Baird. He knows all about it, and he thinks it would be a pity for your father's property to go to an Englishman. Besides, they are not on good terms since the trouble in the vestry."

"Sarah, why do you wish me to marry Curtis Baird?" queried Isabel, with rising curiosity. "You seem so anxious, that I believe——" She hesitated.

"You believe what?" asked Sarah, keenly alert.

"Oh, nothing," answered Isabel; "but tell me your reasons."

"As I told you, I wish to promote your happiness. I see you love him—you do love him, don't you?"

"Love him!" cried Isabel, rapturously.

"You want to marry him, don't you?"

"Want to! No—I—that is—yes, and oh, Sarah, you are a wretched, wretched traitor, and I ought to hate you, but I love you!"

"Miss Burton—Isabel—dearest!" exclaimed a manly voice, as Baird entered the room, having heard the last words. "Remember!" he interrupted, audaciously, stepping toward her, "you haven't much love left for Sarah. You belong to me, and all that you have," he continued, with masculine and youthful selfishness, "comes to me—even in love!" As he spoke he slipped his arm around her waist and bent toward her.

"Yes, yes!" she cried. "But—stay! Not before Sarah——"

"I won't look," cried Sarah, considerately turning her head.

"I wouldn't care if the whole world saw," remarked Baird, kissing his faintly protesting and weakly struggling bride to be. "And you will marry me, won't you?"

"Never! Never!"

"And right now at that," he went on, calmly ignoring her protests.

"Now? No, no! To-morrow!" she pleaded. "Give me more time!"

"Not a minute! I do not know how long I may be able to hold this place. Sir Francis is a very determined man, and we have but a few men."

"Yes," interrupted Sarah, deftly, turning around again; "and if he gets you, Captain Baird, he will certainly hang you, won't he?"

Sarah actually winked at Baird behind Isabel's back—an unheard-of thing for a gentlewoman in North Carolina in that day.

"He will," answered Baird, promptly. "I am sure of it. I judge him by myself. I would have killed him a few moments ago when I had the chance if it hadn't been for your——"

"Kindness of heart," interrupted Sarah, desperately, laying her hand on her lips in great apprehension lest her interest in Duane should be betrayed.

"Oh, Sarah!" cried Isabel, in frantic terror, throwing her arms about Baird, "you cannot think he would do anything so cruel?"

"Of course he would!" answered Sarah, confidently.

"Certainly, certainly!" asserted Baird, gloomily.

"But if I—I—were married to you——"

"He probably would not want to break your heart by hanging me," he continued, adroitly.

"I will marry you to-day—this minute,

Curtis!" she cried, bewildered. "Where is Dr. Forsyth?"

"I will go and fetch him," said Sarah, running out of the room.

Left alone, with Isabel clinging to him, Baird's conscience began to trouble him, for it seemed to him that he was about to delude the girl into marrying him on the strength of a threatened danger to him which depended, first, upon the capture of the place, which he was sure was impossible, and, secondly, upon a degree of brutality in Sir Francis Duane's temperament which he did not believe existed. Therefore he felt constrained, though it might lose him everything, to tell the truth.

"Isabel," he said, nerving himself for a reproach and a refusal perhaps, "I have deceived you, and——"

"Do you mean you do not love me, Curtis?" she cried, in alarm,—"that you

don't want to marry me?" she exclaimed, starting back from his arms.

"Nonsense, dearest!" he added, reassuring her and drawing her to him again, "but I cannot take you under false pretences. I do not really think that Duane will capture the place, or that he would hang me if he did. There!"

"Well," she asked, "is that all?"

"Yes," he answered, shamefacedly. "I thought you were going to marry me because you were afraid for me, and I——"

"I marry you because I love you," she answered, gravely,—"because you are more to me than home, father, friends—everything! My master, my hero, my king!" she added, softly, taking his hand and raising it to her lips.

"Isabel! Dearest!" he cried, in mingled joy and contrition, "I am not worthy to kiss the hem of your gown even!"

"Here is the priest, sir soldier," cried

Sarah, entering the room again, followed by a venerable clergyman in gown and bands, carrying a ponderous prayer-book in his hands. "I have brought Cornet Hale to give away the bride. I shall be maid of honor, so the party is complete," she continued, as they took their places.

The short service was soon over. As they rose to their feet after receiving the good Rector's benediction, Baird tenderly kissed his bride.

"My darling wife, I salute you," he said. "And now I must leave you for a moment to look to the defences."

Sarah and Isabel were left in the room together. This time it was the younger who was weak. The little woman broke down and sobbed wildly.

"Oh, what have I done? Oh, what have I done?" she cried; "you are married now, and it cannot be undone!"

"No," said Isabel, gravely, though with

white face and trembling lips, "we are married, and it cannot be undone. Thank God!"

"And it was I who brought it about!" wailed Sarah. "What will Uncle Burton say? He will hate me forever! I have turned child against father, introduced revolution into the household, broken up my own home!"

"You shall live with us," said Isabel,—"always and forever!"

"And the sight of your happiness would make me ill! I am so little, so homely, and so poor, and nobody wants me!" she cried. "Why—why—did I do it? And it has not brought Sir Francis any nearer!" she added, brokenly.

With a glad cry, Isabel sprang to her side.

"Oh, is that it?" she exclaimed, joyfully, taking her in her arms. "Oh, I see it all now! Curtis was right, you mischief-

maker! You arch plotter! And it was Sir Francis' happiness you wanted and mine you were serving, was it? You artful little deceiver, why, I never thought that you——"

"Well, what?" inquired Sarah, looking up through her tears. "Am I any happier? I have just ruined myself with everybody, and if Sir Francis ever finds it out he will—he will hate me!"

"Do not worry, dear. I shall never tell him, and I will see that Curtis does not. He shall never suspect."

"I am afraid he suspects now," answered Sarah. "He knows that I——"

"That you what, dear?"

"That I love him," whispered Sarah, burying her head on Isabel's shoulder—"that's all. And oh, Isabel, darling, I never, never would have done it if you had loved him, but it's—he—I——"

"He loves you, you would say, Sarah?" asked Isabel.

"Yes, I am sure of it. He did, that is, before this, and now—now—I have lost him!"

She wept bitterly, and would not be comforted.

16

FOR MILITARY PURPOSES ONLY

TOWARD evening Judge Burton, with the soldiers who had been left behind at the cross-roads and before the bridge, reached Duane's encampment. The Judge had plodded along wearily on his tired horse, and he arrived in a most unjudicial frame of mind,—in fact, he was furiously angry,—and when he had interviewed Sir Francis and discovered the condition of affairs his temper was not abated.

"The dastardly impudence of the man!" he cried. "Taking my daughter from the very arms of the man to whom she was to be married! On the very day of her wedding! And running off with her in that way like a moss-trooper, and throwing me, his Majesty's justice, me, sir, into the mud, and ripping my best dress coat! By Gad, sir, what do you mean by allowing it?"

"Allowing it?" answered Sir Francis, sulkily. "By Heaven, sir, I would have you know that I did everything that mortal man could do to catch up with them! My own horse and another shot under me, I rode a troop-horse to death in the chase. But now that I have them here, they shall never escape me! I will stay here till they starve, but I will get them at last!"

"Aye," said the Judge, "they must surrender; there is no provision in the house worth speaking of."

"They have their horses," answered the Colonel, gloomily.

"They won't last long. Fortunately, Greene's army is far from here, and you can take care of any local force that is likely to assemble, so that we shall hold them safely to the end. When we have captured them, Isabel shall yet——"

"Your pardon, Mr. Justice," remarked Sir Francis, sternly, "I have thought over that matter since the events of the morning, and—with due respect to you, sir—I believe that I shall be compelled to decline the honor."

"How, sir! you decline!" shouted the Judge; "decline the hand of my daughter! How dare you!"

"I was willing," responded Sir Francis, with dignity, "to carry out the contract. I trusted that, as I had the respect and esteem, I might eventually win the love and affection of your daughter, but I realize

now that it would be a hopeless task. 'Tis true that Captain Baird carried Isabel off, but it is evident that she went willingly. At the end of the chase they were on a single horse, her animal going lame. So far as I could see, she made not the slightest resistance, and you know she never loved me."

"Love!" exclaimed the Judge, passionately. "Only boys and fools talk of love, sir. This engagement has been publicly announced——"

"If it is publicity at which you are cavilling, sir, I beg to inform you that the whole command about us here, down to the smallest trumpeter, is perfectly aware that the engagement is broken. Besides, sir, from whom could Captain Baird have received the news of our journey, unless from the lady herself? She must have betrayed us."

"I would stake my life on Isabel's

honor," cried the Judge, resenting this new attack. "She may not love you——"

"She does not; and would a woman's honor outweigh her love?" asked the Colonel.

"Zounds, sir! You insult me!"

"I cry your pardon, Mr. Justice. I mean no insult. It may be as you say, but at least the circumstances are suspicious."

"Beg pardon, Sir Francis," said the trooper who had been left behind at the cross-roads, at this moment coming up and saluting, "here's a paper that I picked up at the place where we had the scrimmage, an' I thought maybe your Honor'd like to see it, sir."

Duane was too good a soldier to neglect any possible clue, so, with a further word of apology to the infuriated Judge, he took the paper and opened it.

It was addressed to Curtis Baird. A

glance put him in possession of its contents, down to the initials, "S. B.," with which it was signed. He stared at it a moment in great surprise, the color flooded his face, and he blushed as if he had been a woman.

"Good Gad!" he exclaimed, in a happy tone of voice. "To think of it! Why, she—— Justice Burton," he said, recovering himself and turning toward his companion with a low bow, "I did your daughter a grievous injustice. She is the soul of honor, like her father; I humbly apologize to her and to you. But aside from that, the engagement cannot go on. No, sir," he continued, "I am afraid not. You see,"—he blushed again and laughed boyishly,—"you see—I—I—I love another."

"Damnation, sir!" cried the Judge; "is the whole world love-sick mad? You will give up the siege, then?"

"No, sir," he answered; "I have a deeper

interest than ever in bringing it to a successful consummation."

This enigma was too much for the old man. He glowered at the smiling and jubilant soldier before him, and, after remarking that he intended to go up to the house himself, he stalked out of the tent.

Left to himself, Sir Francis unrolled the little note. He unfolded it, gazed at it long and earnestly, and finally pressed it rapturously to his lips, remarking,—

"Oh, Sarah, Sarah, I have you now!" Then, as his glance fell upon the stockade through the open front of the tent, he added, "That is, I will have you when I get you. And so, good-by to broad acres and the other girl. I owe that young Baird a fortune, and, faith, I believe he will get it."

Meanwhile, the Judge walked gloomily up the hill. A rifle-shot and the bullet which ploughed the earth at his feet warned

him that he was no longer the owner of the place. He took a white handkerchief from his pocket and waved it in the air. Under the sanction of this improvised flag of truce he was allowed to approach nearer the stockade, until he was halted a few feet away and covered by the piece of the dragoon on watch.

"What would you, sir?" asked the sentry.

"Entrance to my house!" thundered the Judge. "I am the owner of this place!"

"No, sir," replied the soldier, "this place belongs to the United States since this morning."

"Damn the United States!"

"Say that again, sir, and I'll put a bullet through you, flag or no flag!" cried the man, wrathfully.

The Judge reflected a moment.

"Call your officer," he shouted back at

the sentry. And a few moments later the head of Curtis Baird appeared over the palisade.

"Good God, Captain Baird!" shrieked the Judge, "this is my place, and I demand instant entrance! I require you at the same time to relinquish to me the custody of my daughter and my niece!"

"Sir," answered Baird, promptly, "you are the avowed enemy of the United States. As an officer of the government I have seen fit to take your property, and I shall continue in possession of it for—er—military purposes."

"And did you take my daughter for the same reason, and do you hold her for military purposes?" bitterly remarked the Judge.

"I hold her," answered Baird, boldly, "I hold her because she is——"

A soft white hand was placed over his lips, and his wife whispered in his ear,

"Do not tell him yet. It would do no good and serve no purpose."

"Isabel," cried her father, as soon as he saw her, "leave this nest of traitors and come with me!"

"Father," she answered, "I am a prisoner, I cannot come."

"Captain Baird holds us with an iron grasp, uncle," said Sarah, whose head appeared by the side of the other two.

"Captain Baird, I demand, as an officer of the King's law, as a father, as a man, that you instantly surrender the persons of my daughter and ward unlawfully held by you!"

"And I decline, sir, as an officer of the United States," replied Baird, gravely, "to comply with your request. Rest easy, sir. I will see that your people are well treated."

The Judge, in grim anger, turned and walked down the hill.

"My regards," cried Sarah after him, "to

Sir Francis. I am afraid that he will never enjoy the broad acres of the Burtons!"

"Oh, Sarah, how dreadful! And father is in such a passion," said Isabel. "He will never forgive us."

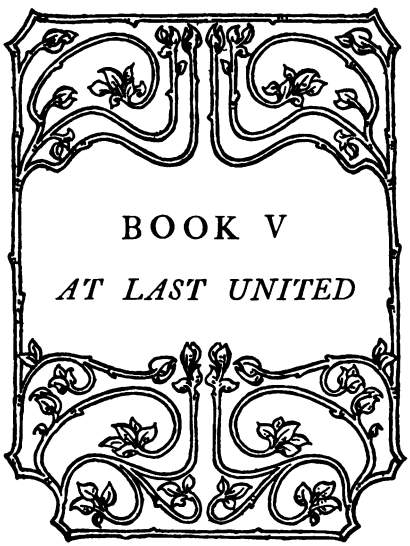
"Oh, yes, he will," answered Sarah. "You will see. It will be all right for you in the end, I am sure. As for me——"

"It will be all right for you, too, dear," interrupted Isabel, turning to her.

"I hope so," replied Sarah, who had recovered in some measure her usual cheerful disposition.

She lost her equanimity again, however, when she discovered, by questioning Baird at the first possible moment, that he had lost her note. He reassured her against the remotely possible chance of its coming into any other person's possession, and convinced her at last that it was probably rotting in some hidden corner of the forest. What would have been her feelings had

she known that at that very moment her famous missive, with its anxious command that Sir Francis Duane should not be harmed in any event, was counting the beatings of that very excited young gentleman's heart?



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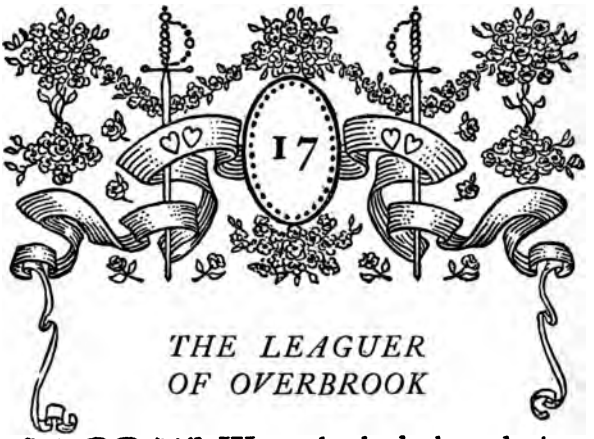


THE LEAGUER OF OVERBROOK

SIX weeks had elapsed, six weeks scarcely less weary for the besiegers than the besieged, although the latter were almost starved and the former, living off the country, were well fed. Sir Francis Duane had clung to the investment of Overbrook with English tenacity. During the course of the siege his feelings had undergone something of a change. The affront to his pride in the Sabine exploit of the American Captain

still rankled, and he was as determined as ever not to let it go unpunished, but the spirit of animosity which had been at first engendered had been gradually dissipated in his growing passion for the mocking Sarah.

While he had striven to conceal his emotions, in view of his approaching marriage to Isabel, he had scarcely been aware how deep and intense had been the affection which her cousin had awakened in his soul. Now he realized it all. He had taken the bit off his heart, and it had run away from him. He thought only of Sarah, and, in short, he felt almost grateful to Baird for running off with his prospective bride.

He was not happy in the siege, however, for he knew that by this time the little garrison at Overbrook must be reduced to the most dreadful straits, and the thought that his sweetheart might be suffering the

pangs of hunger after a palling diet of horseflesh filled him with anxiety and uncertainty. A half-dozen times he had been on the point of writing a note to Baird, and, sending it under a flag of truce, offering to withdraw from the siege if he could take Sarah with him. The fact that the proposition would be in effect a disposing of the person of that lady without consulting her, for the purpose of ransoming Baird, would, he was entirely aware, have caused its instant rejection by the American officer.

He was not at all certain, either, of Sarah's feeling toward him, although he felt that she was not indifferent to him. The way she had received his kiss in the hall that night,—he was sure it had been returned at first,—the fact that she had sought him out on the battle-field, the anxiety in her voice as she had drawn his hand to her breast when she had found him

wounded, her prompt action in striking up Baird's pistol and so saving his life on the stairs, and, most of all, the note which had brought about the present situation with its significant clause, "I make an express condition, and trust to your honor to comply with it, that not a hair of Sir Francis' head be touched," gave him ground for assuming that she was deeply interested in him, at least. But this was far from warranting the presumption on his part that she loved him sufficiently to give up everything for him; so he harassed himself with doubts and suspicions.

He did not, however, confine himself during the siege merely to standing and waiting. Taking a leaf out of the American book, during the first month of their investment the soldiers, under his instruction, constructed a rude wooden tower of logs, impenetrable to rifle-shots, which was mounted on wheels, and when completed

could be pushed near to the stockade, which the men on its top would then overlook and command. The men had progressed slowly, and it was not until the month had elapsed that the tower was ready for use.

This military contrivance, as old as the art of warfare itself, had been first put in operation by a South Carolinian named Maham in some previous operations undertaken by Lee and Marion against the British forts. Baird was aware of its construction from the first, but his force was too weak for a sortie to destroy it, and he could do nothing but watch and wait as usual. Strange to say, just as it was completed and ready for use it was set on fire and burned to the ground.

We left a certain Sergeant Sylvanus Dade, the veteran match-maker, with a wound in his shoulder and a badly bruised body, lying in the creek by the side of the

bridge he had so gallantly defended. The cool water had revived him after his fall, and he had climbed out by a prodigious effort and crawled to the cabin of one of the poorer settlers of the neighborhood. There he had remained for the space of a month while recovering from his wounds. When he felt himself in trim again, he had naturally gone to Overbrook.

Approaching circumspectly, late one evening, he had secured a position from which the whole situation was revealed to him. It was impossible for him to pass through the British lines of investment and gain the stockade, but he noticed that the outskirts of the camp were negligently, or not at all, guarded, and that little or no watch was kept in the direction whence he came. Greene and his army, after the drawn battle of Hobkirk's Hill, were far away to the southward, busily occupied with the British posts in that section of the

field, and no attack was to be apprehended by the besiegers from them, consequently they only watched the hill. Therefore the Sergeant determined upon the bold exploit of burning the tower.

The night happened to be dark and cloudy, and a furious wind blowing through the trees enabled him to work without fear of detection. He succeeded by morning in surrounding the supports of the tower, the bottom timbers of which happened to be made of very dry wood, with a mass of inflammable material, over which, with a deep sigh of regret, he poured the contents of a well-filled whiskey-flask. The touching of it off was, of course, the most risky part of the whole undertaking, but with flint and steel he succeeded in igniting the mass in several places before he was detected. Then, instead of running immediately, as a less thoughtful man would have done, he took shelter behind an adjoining

tree, and by skilfully using his pistols and rifle, with which he knocked over the sentry and the first two men who came to put out the fire, he succeeded in holding the British in check until it got such headway that it soon completely destroyed the tower.

Sir Francis was frantic with rage at this mishap, and it would have gone hard with Dade if he had been caught. He succeeded, however, in making good his escape, and morning found him setting forth to the southward with all the energy of his long legs to hunt for General Greene and beg him to come and relieve the situation.

Baird and his party had been much cheered by the burning of the tower, which they had, of course, witnessed from the hill. The shots which followed convinced them that it was not the result of accident, and that they possessed at least one friend in the vicinity. The Americans immediately surmised that it was the handi-

work of Sergeant Dade. Greatly encouraged, therefore, hoping that he had escaped and would bring rescue to them, they continued their determined resistance and held on resolutely as before.

Judge Burton had remained with Sir Francis, chiefly because he had no place else to go,—it was dangerous to travel alone in that country, and Sir Francis had refused to allow him a single soldier for an escort,—but the relations between the two gentlemen had become extremely strained, and save for formal courtesies there was little or no intercourse between them. Deprived of his vocation, of his books, his household, his daughter, the Judge passed the long hours under the shade of the trees at the foot of the hill, surveying the stockade and the house, over which fluttered in happy defiance the American flag,—a thing he abominated as the symbol of everything unholy and disgraceful.

The feelings of the Judge toward Baird had not changed in the slightest degree. He had made several attempts either to get into the house himself or to get his daughter and his niece out of it, and had so infuriated the Americans by his intemperate language that Baird had been obliged to warn Sir Francis to keep him away, or he would not be responsible for the consequences. Duane, therefore, refused, in a stormy interview, to permit him to approach the house again, and the majesty of the King's law, represented by the Judge, found itself powerless before the might of the King's army, as represented by the Colonel.

After the mishap to the Maham tower Sir Francis determined upon another expedient. The hill upon which Overbrook stood dropped on one side abruptly down to the river, and the palisades were planted on the very edge of the declivity. The steep slope of the grounds prevented a clear view

of the river from the top of the hill. As has been said, the place was unscalable and that side lightly guarded. Accordingly, Sir Francis determined to dig his way into the house. Every night, therefore, details of soldiers on the river bank burrowed slowly inward and upward toward the house. So skilfully and carefully were their operations carried on that the Americans had not the slightest idea of what was occurring.

As this mine, which was not intended to blow up the house but to admit his troopers, progressed rapidly, Sir Francis became more and more sanguine of success. The Judge had given him a plan of the enclosure, and he had arranged to terminate the excavation in the cellar of the house, into which they hoped to enter unobserved. Finally the tunnel was completed, and they were face to face with the loosely laid stones of the cellar wall.

A few moments of work would admit them.

It was about the middle of July. The night was dark, and Sir Francis determined to enter the stockade that night a little after midnight. He made his plans carefully. With twenty men he arranged to break into the house through the covered way into the cellar. With half of this force he would master the people in-doors. A sergeant and ten men were to dash for the gate, overpower the surprised defenders, and throw it open. The rest of his troops were to creep up the hill without discovering themselves, if possible, and rush in when the gate was opened. He trusted the whole affair might be successfully carried out without firing a shot.

Save for the doubt in his mind as to Sarah's feelings, Sir Francis was very happy in the thought that a few hours would probably put him in possession of the man

who had thwarted him and the woman he loved. There was sweetness, too, in the idea that he could demonstrate his power to the woman who had flouted him and whom Baird had stolen away. Altogether, contingent upon the opinions of Sarah, he anticipated a very happy evening. Judge Burton, who had, of course, been fully aware of the preparations, was feeling in considerably better spirits. He was burning for a few untrammelled words with Curtis Baird. Incidentally, he was desirous of a brief interview with his daughter.

In addition to planning the campaign, Sir Francis had carefully thought over everything he should say and do in every contingency which the most fertile imagination could suggest as likely to occur. The Judge, too, had devoted his leisure moments to formulating his own wishes and desires, and both gentlemen were fully

prepared. Like the Jews and Samaritans, their intercourse continued strictly formal, and each kept to his own end of the camp. The Judge would have preferred to go with the forlorn hope under Sir Francis, but he had been bluntly repulsed by that gentleman when he ventured to suggest it, and he was perforce compelled to accept a position with the main body.

But every plan which a man has ever laid is liable to be disconcerted by a woman, and the disturbing factor was introduced in this instance in the person of the fascinating little match-maker,—or unmaker would be a better word,—the mocking Sarah. Sir Francis had gone to his tent in the early evening for a few moments and was busily making his preparations for the adventure of the night—part of the preparations being the reading for the thousandth time of a well-worn note—when his orderly stopped before his tent with the information that

the sentry had halted a lady from the house who desired to see Colonel Duane.

Sir Francis instantly forgot about the sortie. His heart gave a furious bound, and his voice trembled in spite of himself as he bade the orderly pass the lady within the lines and escort her to his tent. Hastily lighting an additional candle and pulling forward a rude camp-chair which had been made out of tree-boughs, laying his sword and pistols on the table, at the same time giving a few furtive tugs at his war-worn uniform, he filled in the time before the flap of the tent was lifted and a woman, heavily cloaked and with a hat drawn down over her face, entered. A glance told him she was too short for Isabel. The leap of his heart indicated to him that it was Sarah, and he did not need that she should take off her hat and drop her cloak in order that he might recognize her.

18

THE SORTIE OF SARAH

THE first sight of her filled him with apprehension and dismay. She was but a shadow of her former self; her great black eyes shone from her pale, wasted face with almost unearthly brilliancy; starvation had robbed her pretty figure of its graceful, rounded curves, and her sunken cheeks and pinched lips spoke eloquently of the ravages of hunger.

"Good God!" exclaimed Sir Francis.

"My poor child! How you must have suffered! I never realized, I never dreamed——"

"And did you think, Sir Francis," she asked, "that women could live on horses" —with a shudder of disgust—"forever?"

"Horses!" he exclaimed. "Had you nothing else?"

"But little, sir, after the first week. But I am revealing the secrets of the house. 'Tis a most unmilitary thing, I fear," she added, with a smile, which had lost none of its brilliancy and but little of its mockery.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Sir Francis, in consternation. "And I suppose you are hungry now!"

"Hungry!" she exclaimed, with a savage glance. "Oh, no, sir! In fact, I am come to invite you to dinner."

"Thank you," replied the Colonel, gravely, "but I think it would be better

for you to dine with me under the circumstances. Pray be seated.—Orderly!" he called, and as that functionary thrust his head into the tent, he bade him summon his black servant and see that something to eat, the best in the camp, was brought immediately.

A cold chicken, some corn-bread, and a bottle of wine were soon placed on the little camp-table. Sir Francis had handed Sarah to a chair with all the grace of a court. She drew up her seat before the appetizing viands, and, leaning her head in her hands, burst into tears.

"Why, what's the matter?" exclaimed Sir Francis, in great surprise.

"I am so hungry," she answered, "I actually cannot control myself! Would you believe it, I should like to pick the poor chicken up in my hands and tear it to pieces! Don't look at me! I shall disgrace myself forever!"

"Never mind me," said Sir Francis. "I know how it is. Pick it up if you want to. I shall love to have you do it."

The truth that lay behind his last assertion was a sure sign of the desperate nature of his passion for the girl. Only a very devoted lover loves to see his sweetheart eat. She wasted no more words or tears, but without more ado began on the chicken. For a few moments conversation was stilled in the presence of the primal instinct of hunger, which comes even to the daintiest. Sir Francis waited upon her and served her with the expertness of a major-domo. He carved the chicken, filled the gourd with wine, and fairly hovered over her.

"Oh," she said at last, with a satisfied air, "I feel like a selfish animal to be eating down here when they are so hungry up there! If you could see poor Isabel, Sir Francis!"

"I have been waiting here for some six

weeks for that pleasure," answered the other, grimly.

"Oh, have you?" cried Sarah, in alarm; "I hoped that you——"

"That I what?"

"That you might go away," she answered, lamely.

"Go away and leave you—I mean Isabel?—never! Besides, I don't feel sorry for her. She brought it on herself."

"No, I——" Sarah answered, quickly, and then she stopped with a sudden blush, for she had almost betrayed herself.

"You what?" asked Sir Francis.

"I—I—don't care whether you are sorry or not, I mean."

"Oh, don't you? Well, madam, about six weeks ago I came to that house on the hill yonder for a bride, and a bride I intend to have before I leave it, or know the reason why!" answered Sir Francis, grimly.

"You haven't captured us yet, though," remarked Sarah.

"No, I have not, but I shall," he replied, lightly. "By your own confession, all your provisions are gone except——"

"Except that one horse, Erebus, that helped them to escape——"

"I trust that I am not so small as to feel resentment against a horse," answered Sir Francis, magnanimously. "He is too good an animal to be eaten, and I mean to appropriate him to my own use when I have captured the stockade."

"And when that interesting event takes place, have you made up your mind what you will do with Isabel? Will you appropriate her also?"

"Not precisely, but I shall find some way to punish her."

"Heavens! You don't intend to marry her, do you?" she cried, archly, the good dinner having put her in a better humor.

"I find it very hard," he began, with painful dignity, smarting under her quip, "to——"

"Give up the broad acres? I should think so!"

Sir Francis stamped his foot upon the ground.

"Will you be silent upon that subject?" he cried. "I command——"

"Command, sir!" she exclaimed, resentfully. "And by what right do you command me?"

"Let me see," added Sir Francis, slowly, recovering himself, "you came down here under a flag of truce——"

"I did not!"

"You didn't even wave your handkerchief?"

"What, wave my handkerchief to a common soldier!" drawing herself up haughtily. "I would scarcely have done that if it had been you, Sir Francis."

"How did you get here, then?"

"I just walked up to the soldier out there and said that I wished to see you."

"And did you realize, or do you realize, that you are now a prisoner of war, madam, and have no freedom whatever? That is why I commanded you to be silent on that old score."

"A prisoner!" she cried, faintly. "And am I not to return when I wish?"

"No, madam; not unless I give you permission."

"Why, it's outrageous! I came here to see you and—and——"

"It is outrageous, doubtless, Miss Burton, but it is war," he remarked, sternly; "therefore, as I said before, we will have no more disgraceful allusions of the moment since."

"Won't we!" she answered, with spirit. "You may hold me a prisoner, but know,

sir, that no man that ever lived was able to prison a woman's tongue!"

"Few women, even," commented the Colonel, "have been equal to that task."

"And I shall say what I please, do you understand, sir?" she continued, with the rising inflection of anger. "Broad acres! Broad acres! Broad a——"

She faltered and burst into tears again. He regarded her in silent consternation.

"How I hate you!" she cried, at last. "I hate all men! They are all selfish, horrid brutes! Just because Captain Baird was in love with Isabel he—he—has gotten us all into this trouble," she wailed, with feminine inconsistency. "And you don't care for—you don't care for anything except Isabel's broad acres. You are a heartless, horrid wretch!" she continued, weeping vociferously, watching him meanwhile out of the corner of her eye.

Sir Francis, for once in his life, felt him-

self completely nonplussed by these extraordinary accusations. He wanted to take Sarah in his arms and assure her that there was nothing on earth he cared for like her little black head. He wanted to crush her up against his great heart, which for six weeks had been thirsting for her, and pour into her ear a tale of love and devotion all the more intense because it had been fought against and struggled with. She seemed so small and frail that he yearned to lift her up as if she had been a baby. Or he could have thrown himself down at her pretty feet and been trampled upon had she so willed it.

But Sir Francis was wise in his generation; he knew that the time was not yet, so he waited, quietly watching her. He was a modest young man in many respects, too, and he was not at all certain as to how his advances would be received. So he looked at her in the helpless silence with

which men contemplate changeful women when their emotions get the better of them and manifest themselves in tears.

"I wish you wouldn't cry," he said, at last. "I'd give anything to make you happy."

"You wouldn't give up the broad acres, though," she murmured, in her sobs.

"Wouldn't I? Oh, Sarah!"

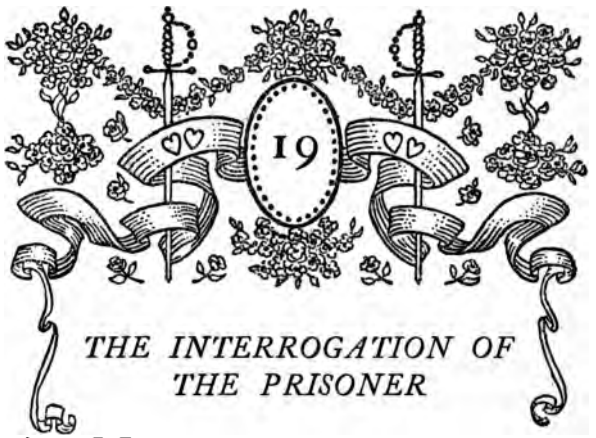
He sprang forward, but she rose quickly to her feet.

"Oh, what have I said?" she cried. "I didn't mean that, really. Don't come near me, Sir Francis!"

The poor fellow's heart sank into his boots again.

"I suppose," he said, sadly, "it is your love of teasing that makes you endeavor to make me so miserable. What shall I do? What did you come here for, anyway?"

"Is that my dismissal?" she asked, eagerly.



THE INTERROGATION OF THE PRISONER

A SUDDEN thought struck him. He reflected quickly, changed his tone and his tactics, and began again:

"We do not dismiss prisoners in that way. I am now about to interrogate you as a suspected spy. Be seated," he said, with authority, formally pointing to a chair, as he sat down opposite her.

It was a novel sensation for her to be commanded in that way, but to her own

great surprise she obeyed him without protest.

"Now, you came for what purpose?"

"Why—I"—her glance fell upon the table—"to get something to eat, of course."

"Oh!" said Sir Francis. "And did you desert your camp and your comrades to satisfy the cravings of your own appetite?" he continued, suavely.

"Desert, sir! I came for—I came for——" she cried, in indignation.

"For something to eat? Precisely!" he said. "And is the commandant of the garrison aware of your absence?"

"Nobody is aware of it except the Cornet; he let me out."

"Oh, the Cornet? There is a cornet, is there, and he let you out, did he? Why did he do that?"

"Well, he seems to—to——"

"In short, he is in love with you, I sup-

pose," interrupted her questioner. "You've been keeping your hand in on him, have you?" he rudely burst forth, in fury, forgetting himself again. "I will settle with him when I get the place!"

"Mercy on us, he didn't run away with your bride! It was Captain Baird!" exclaimed Sarah, in pleased surprise.

"Never mind about Captain Baird. I have no quarrel with him at present."

"No quarrel!" she cried, opening her eyes in astonishment. "Why, he—he—ran away with your bride! Didn't you——"

"Your pardon, madam," interrupted the Colonel. "Please to remember that, so far as it is possible between man and woman, I am conducting this examination, and that you are here to answer questions."

"Yes, sir," she answered, mockingly.

"And having come here for something

to eat, and having received it, what was the next move in contemplation?"

"I thought you—would—take me back," she said, at last.

"I!"

"Yes, I hoped that you—that you—that I—that we—would go up to the hall together, Sir Francis."

"Ah! Now we have the truth. You came to entice me to the hall, did you?"

"Yes."

"And for what reason?"

She had grace enough to blush and turn away her head.

"Not for any particular reason."

"Oh, simply for the pleasure of my society, was it?"

"Yes, of course. You see, it has been so long since I have seen a man. Captain Baird is so wrapped up in Isabel——"

"There is the Cornet," interrupted Sir Francis.

"Yes, but he—oh, dear, why do you dare to catechise me in this manner?" she replied, in confusion; "and why am I so foolish as to answer you? I shall not say another word, sir!"

"Hm!" remarked the soldier, quietly; "we have means of—er—making recalcitrant prisoners open their mouths——"

"Sir Francis, you wouldn't dare!"

"Miss Sarah, I would dare everything to win the prize for which I am playing."

"Do you care so much for Isabel, then?—for Isabel's property?" she faltered.

"As I told you," said the Colonel, "I came here for a bride, and I don't leave without getting one! I think I can surmise the reason to which I owe the honor of this visit. You have heard that if by any chance the Americans could get possession of my person they might make terms which would enable them to escape. Without counting the cost or the consequences,

you have come here with some foolish plan of enticing me into the stockade by fostering in my mind the idea that I shall accomplish my end and win my bride thereby."

Sarah blushed and shrank before this hard dissection of her hopes and motives. Sir Francis, delighted with the success of his tactics, waited for her to speak again.

"You—you do not think me unmaidenly in what I have done?" she faltered, in great distress, turning away her drooping head.

"Pardon me," he replied, with well-simulated coldness, steeling his heart against her unspoken appeal; "my thoughts of you at present are not under discussion."

She turned deadly pale at this withering reproof, and sank back in her chair with a look of utter dismay.

"In the first place, madam," he con-

tinued, pitilessly, "though I have no love for Captain Baird, I believe him to be an honorable soldier. He would rather die, I am sure, than procure the safety of himself or his men by yielding up Miss Isabel. I should not do it——"

"Oh, you do love her, then? Can it be possible? What have I done?"

"I was about to say, Miss Burton, I should not do it were I in his place," he continued. "So that your errand is entirely fruitless. You have come here to entice me, and got yourself captured for no purpose."

"I was desperate," said Sarah, quickly, on her defence at last. "Isabel is ill. She is not made of so tough a fibre as I am, and I—I—couldn't bear to see her suffer. I am afraid she will die, and they are all so hungry! One of the soldiers is dead already, and two of the slaves; and I thought—I hoped—that we could go up to

the hall together on some pretext, and you could see how everything was, and you would be merciful and let us go. Of course, I didn't tell Captain Baird, for he wouldn't have allowed me to come. He is almost crazy now. Oh, they have all been punished for loving each other!"

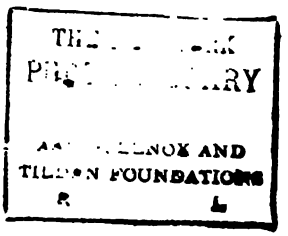
"And is that all you thought, Miss Burton?"

"No, sir, I will make a clean breast of it. I hoped that if we could get you inside the fort on some pretext we could—make you let us go."

"Exactly! And you could lend yourself, your fascinations, your influence, your power over me," he said, betrayingly, "to further this unworthy project!"

"I—I—was so hungry!" she urged, piteously, in justification, "and I——" She stopped and dragged her glance away from him lest she should betray herself; lest he should find that it was a hunger of the

"I—I—was so hungry"



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heart to see him rather than anything else that had brought her out.

"Very well, madam," he replied, formally, "I intend to carry out your little plan. If you will allow me a few moments of preparation, I will go with you into the stockade."

Having gained the point and won her way, her mood changed.

"Oh, Sir Francis! I cannot allow you —I am afraid you—you—will be disappointed," she cried.

"Leave that to me. I will take the responsibility. As I said to you, I have had several plans in view, one to punish Captain Baird for his audacity and meddling impertinence, and another to secure a bride."

"And a third design upon, I suppose, the property of——"

Her shot failed. The Colonel was too sure of himself and of her now.

"Miss Burton," he answered, "you have

come here on a certain errand; you have discharged that errand. You have formed a certain plan; the plan is about to be carried out: I am going with you. May I ask that you will not hereafter refer to this extremely disagreeable subject?"

"Why are you so bitter against Isabel, then?" she asked, evasively.

"Because," replied Sir Francis, most mendaciously, "I have reason to suspect that the information which enabled Captain Baird to waylay us came from her."

"Indeed," she cried, indignantly, "you do her wrong! It did not!"

"You are a vehement defender, madam; perhaps you can supply me with information which will enable me to identify the writer of this," he added, playing another card by taking from his breast pocket a little, torn piece of paper. It gave evidence of constant handling and had been torn in two along the crease. Sir Francis

only handed her the upper half. Recognizing it at once, she took it from him. Joy! Surely there was yet a chance of preserving her secret; perhaps the other half had not been found. She could not control the burning blush which suffused her pale cheek as she looked at it, but by a tremendous effort she glanced over it in seeming carelessness, and returned it to him with the remark that the writing was not familiar to her. She had to do it!

"Perhaps this portion will enable you to solve the enigma," coolly continued Sir Francis, remorselessly pulling out the last half, bearing her own initials.

He had known, then, all the time! Her pride was broken; he had robbed her of everything.

"Sir Francis—Sir Francis," she cried, miserably, "how could you—how could you?" And for the third time she hid her face in her hands and wept.

"How could I?" exclaimed Sir Francis, rising and stepping toward her. "How could you? Why did you warn them? I never——"

"Sir Francis!" she burst out, in indignation, lifting her head, "do not dare to touch me! I have told you again and again that I hated you, and I mean it—now! I could not bear to see Isabel unhappy! That's all. There wasn't anything else. There wasn't a thought for myself—or for you—or——"

"May I point out, Miss Burton," he began quickly, his heart beating madly with this confirmation of his hopes, "that no one has accused you of thinking of me or yourself at all?"

"Let us end this!" said Sarah, completely enmeshed. "You have treated me outrageously! Come up to the hall, if you dare! I have not a bit of a scruple about betraying you, or anything; let us go now!"

"In a moment," cried Duane, looking at his watch and seizing his sword. "It is ten o'clock; a moment or two and I will be with you."

He stepped outside of the tent as he spoke. The note was left lying on the table. As soon as his back was turned Sarah pounced upon it and lifted it up.

"He had it in his breast pocket! Next to his heart!" she murmured. "How worn it is! I wonder—it looks as if it had been read over and over again! How he must despise me!"

She seized the paper as if to tear it in two; at the same instant Sir Francis, who had returned, caught her wrists in an iron grasp.

"Pardon me, Miss Sarah," he cried, "I would not lose that scrap of paper for all the broad acres of the Burtons!"

She dropped it at his feet without another word. He picked it up and replaced

it in the pocket from whence he had taken it.

"I suppose you will hold it over me forever," she murmured. "How could I have done it! It has brought nothing but trouble to every one! I wish that I had let matters take their course. I am so unhappy, and I have lost your—oh, what can you—what can any one—think?"

"We will go up to the hall if you will. Perhaps I may tell you there."

He stepped to the door of the tent and lifted it.

"Let us go, then, if you will be so foolish," she said, inclining her head to him as she passed out.

There was just a little bit of hope left in her heart from his last words. And they were together anyway.

20

CAPTOR AND CAPTIVE

THE two walked slowly through the camp until they came to the foot of the hill. Sarah was too preoccupied to notice that there seemed to be an unusual commotion about her, that by the Colonel's orders a party of men were hurrying off toward the river in the darkness, and that the rest of the soldiery were arming and assembling in ranks, and that preparations for an immediate attack were being made.

The Colonel, who had simply anticipated the hour for the attack, paused for a last whispered direction to one of his subordinates, and then followed her up the road. Her pace became slower and slower as they approached the stockade. About half-way up the hill she stopped.

"Sir Francis," she said, "I cannot let you go on. There is no bride for you at the house on the hill. I have deceived you in that too. Isabel was married to Captain Baird the day they came here. The Rector of the parish is there. He married them. You must go back! Captain Baird will never permit you to get away."

"I suspected as much," answered Sir Francis, calmly, with astonishing unconcern. It was impossible for her to see his face in the darkness, but his voice gave no evidence of either surprise or indignation. "Yet, nevertheless, I have agreed to

enter the stockade with you, and I shall do it."

"But you don't understand!" she cried, laying her hand on his arm. "You will be taken prisoner! They will hold you! Your soldiers will have to go away in order to make you free, and you will lose liberty as well as bride, and I cannot have you——"

"Confidence for confidence, Miss Burton. On your word of honor, why did you write that note? Was it for Isabel's sake? The truth, now!" he continued, as she hesitated.

"No," she answered, softly, the darkness giving her courage.

"Was it for mine?"

"Partly. I knew that she didn't love you——"

"But there was another reason, was there not?"

There was a long silence.

"Yes," she answered, faintly, at last.

"And what was that?"

"I cannot tell you, Sir Francis! Do not press me! 'Tis most unkind!"

His arm had stolen around her waist now. In her agitation she scarcely noticed it.

"And will there not be a bride for me at the top of the hill?"

"I—I—I don't know—what you mean."

"I mean that I love you, Sarah, and that I am glad that Baird took Isabel away from me. I was a coward not to have confessed my love and asked you to make me happy long since. From the moment I saw you I have loved you, but the engagement had been entered upon. It was my father's wish, that of the Judge also, and I was—I am still—so desperately poor. I hesitated, temporized; then I was jealous of Baird. It made me determined to marry Isabel in spite of him, but

it was you I loved from the beginning to the end! And it is you I love now!" He swept her unresisting form toward him. "It almost killed me when I saw you looking so pale and hungry in the tent. I have been waiting for you, dearest. I swear to you, I have not had a thought of revenge, of anything but getting you; all I want is you!—you! If you will but take me! If you do not mind my being poor! I will come back after the war is over and we will settle down together, poor in fortune, rich in love. That little note! Didn't you see how worn it was, darling? I have read it over and over. I have worn it out with kisses. You do not answer me. I have been afraid that you do not love me. Oh, Sarah, you do, don't you?"

It was delicious there in the night on the hill. He held her so strongly. His voice quivered with passion. She could almost

hear his heart beating as he asked the question.

"Isabel is so much more beautiful than I," she murmured, temporizing to the last. "I don't see how——"

"She can't hold a candle to you in my eyes," said Sir Francis, fervently. "As I see you, you are more beautiful——"

"You don't see me at all now," answered Sarah.

"No, but I feel you," said Sir Francis, giving her a bearlike hug. "Say that you love me! Do not shatter my dream!"

"I"—she answered, hesitatingly—"I—you shall have an answer—a bride—in the stockade."

She struggled faintly as he turned her face up toward his own and pressed a long, fervent kiss upon her lips.

"I love you!" she cried, abandoning herself to his caress. "I loved you when

you kissed me in the hall, but it was nothing like this," she added.

"Now let us go," he said, at last, tearing himself away.

"Not now, not now!" she cried. "You are mine, and I cannot have you taken prisoner!"

"I am your prisoner already, dearest," he answered. "But I promised you confidence for confidence. I have made arrangements to capture the stockade tonight. A party of my men, who are even now on the way, will break in through the cellar,—we have tunnelled in from the river bank,—and we will gain the house probably without firing a shot."

"Is that why you were going to the stockade with me?" she asked, in sudden suspicion, drawing away from him.

"Don't do that, Sarah," he answered. "I swear to you that to gain your love I

would willingly be taken prisoner. I came with you because I love you, and for no other reason."

"You have beaten me at every point," she answered. "'Tis a new experience, but I like it."

"One thing more before we go," added Sir Francis.

"No, not another kiss."

"Yes, a thousand, if I wish," he cried, imperiously, suiting the action to the word; "but this is something less sweet. Do not tell them anything about this, except that I am your prisoner and that you promised me a bride within the stockade, and let me do the talking."

"A hard task for a woman," she answered, "but I promise."

A few steps more and they were at the gate of the enclosure.

"Who goes there?" cried the sentry as they approached.

"A friend, Miss Burton, with a prisoner," she answered.

"Stand where you are," cried the man, "until the officer of the guard is called."

In a moment the Cornet, lantern in hand, peered over the gate-way.

"Is it you, Miss Sarah?" he cried.

"Damn his impudence! Miss Sarah, indeed!" exclaimed the Colonel, under his breath.

"Yes, 'tis I, and I have a prisoner. Will you permit us to pass in?"

"There is no one else with you?"

"No one, I pledge you my word of honor."

"Advance, then."

In a few moments Sarah and the Colonel entered the stockade.

"Colonel Duane!" cried the Cornet, in astonishment, as he recognized the Englishman.

"The same, sir," replied Duane.

"Miss Sarah——"

"Miss Burton, sir!" thundered the Colonel, "if you please!"

"Sir," said the Cornet, "this is a most unusual tone for a prisoner to assume."

"Mr. Hale," said Sarah, quickly, "the Colonel is my prisoner, not yours. Stand aside, please. Come, Sir Francis, I will take you to Captain Baird."

SIR FRANCIS DEMANDS A BRIDE

IN a moment the two stepped into the familiar great hall of the old house. Baird and Isabel were there. She looked fearfully wasted and ill, and Baird was haggard and worn from privation, anxiety, and service.

"No, no!" she was saying, as they entered the room; "I will not have Erebus killed——"

"But, dearest, he is the last one. It is our lives or his."

"He carried me to you, and I will not have him slaughtered!"

"He is too good a horse to be eaten, Captain Baird," said Sir Francis, calmly.

"Colonel Duane!" cried Baird, laying his hand upon his sword.

"Sir Francis, you here!" screamed Isabel, springing to her feet.

"How came you here, sir?" asked Baird, stepping toward him.

Sir Francis bowed gracefully toward Sarah, remarking,—

"I am a prisoner, sir."

"A prisoner! Whose?"

"Mine," answered Sarah.

"Yours?"

"Even mine," said Sarah.

"And you captured him where?"

"In his camp."

"You went there?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"A short time ago."

"Without my permission?"

"Without your permission, Captain Baird," courtesying.

"How did you get out of the stockade?"

"Cornet Hale passed me through the gate, sir."

"Ahem! I shall attend to him later," said Baird, sternly. "And how did you get Sir Francis here?"

"He—I——"

"I came for my bride, sir," answered Sir Francis, equably.

"Oh, you did, did you? Did you make any promises to him, Sarah?"

"Promises?"

"I mean, did you promise him immunity, did he come under the protection of the flag, or——"

"No promises of that sort were made me," said Sir Francis, gravely. "I could

not bear to see a lady wander around the hill alone at night, and I came back with her. When I reached the stockade, the desire to claim my promised bride became too strong for me." He bowed low to Isabel, who had fallen back in the chair, weak and faint and terrified. "I determined to enter."

"A most unfortunate resolution for you, sir," said Baird, sternly, "for now that we have you, we will not let you go. Sarah, I know not how you have managed it, but you have rendered us supreme service. Your sword, Sir Francis. I shall use you to effect our escape. You come in the nick of time, sir. One poor dying horse stands between us and starvation.—Without there!" he cried, raising his voice and stepping past Sir Francis toward the door. "In here with the guard!"

"I came here for a bride, and I intend to have her," said Sir Francis, imperturbably,

stepping toward Isabel. She sank on her knees before him.

"Oh, Sir Francis!" she cried, "as you are powerful, be merciful! I was ready to marry you. I pledge you my word that I intended to carry out the engagement. It was through no treachery of mine that you lost me. But I see now that if the marriage had been entered upon it would have been a mistake for both of us; I loved Captain Baird long before I saw you, and I appeal to you, sir, be merciful! Let us go free!"

"Rise, dearest," said Baird, tenderly lifting her up. "You need not appeal to Sir Francis; he is our prisoner and in our power."

"Pardon me," Sir Francis remarked, with provoking calmness, "I am Miss Sarah's prisoner, not yours."

"It is the same, sir," answered Baird, impetuously. "We hold you."

"And Miss Burton——" continued the Colonel, turning toward Isabel.

"Madam Baird, if you please, sir!" interrupted the American, as if exploding a bombshell, and waiting for the effect upon the Colonel's face.

"Ah, so!" said the Colonel, with the greatest *sang-froid.* "To be sure, I had heard of it, but it had escaped me for the moment. I congratulate you, sir, and madam. Allow me." He drew forth a silver box, and, with a graceful bow, offered them a pinch of snuff. "No? Very well, then, as I told you, I came to the stockade for a bride, sir——"

"Can you contemplate taking a wedded wife, sir?" asked Isabel.

"Certainly not," answered the Colonel, smiling. "The bride I have come for is here."

He turned to Sarah, slipped his arm around her, and drew her closely to him.

"Sarah!" cried Baird, in astonishment.

"Lady Duane, sir, that is to be, if you please," answered Sir Francis, nonchalantly.

"Oh, Sarah, you darling!" cried Isabel, impulsively, turning toward her. "I am so glad."

"This alters the situation somewhat," said Baird, "but it doesn't yet effect our escape. Sir Francis is still a prisoner. If you do not yield up your sword instantly, sir, I will have you disarmed by the guard yonder," he continued, pointing to four or five soldiers of the guard, who were filing into the room.

Colonel Duane quickly pulled out his watch.

"Half-after ten o'clock," he said, apparently disregarding Baird's remark; "they should be here now. Yes, I think I hear them on the stairs. If we have been informed correctly, in another moment they

will be in the hall. Here they are, gentlemen," he cried, as the door was broken open and the room was filled with red-coated soldiers, who overpowered the surprised and starved Americans almost without a struggle. Baird, whipping out his sword, seized Isabel and retreated to the stairway.

"You are now my prisoner, Captain Baird," remarked Sir Francis, calmly.

"We are betrayed!" cried Baird. "Without there!" he called, loudly. "To the rescue!"

"'Tis useless, sir, for you to call or to make resistance," continued Sir Francis; "my soldiers in another moment will be in possession of the stockade."

As he spoke a shot or two rang out, there was a brief scuffle, the gates were thrown open, and the enclosure was filled with British soldiery. Baird dropped his sword.

"You have won, sir," he said. "I

yield my sword. I am your prisoner.—Isabel, it is all over," he whispered.

Sir Francis' first action was not very menacing.

"Go, about a half-dozen of you," he said, "to the camp and bring up something to eat for these people.—Ah, Justice Burton," he added, blandly, as the tall form of the old Judge was seen forcing itself through the crowd, "I bid you welcome to Overbrook. It will give me great pleasure to put you in possession of it again. Meanwhile, we are about to have a wedding. I believe there is a chaplain or a clergyman present."

"I congratulate you upon your capture, and I rejoice, indeed, that you have come to your senses," cried the Judge, delighted at the turn of affairs. "I trust that Isabel is in the same mind, and that she now acquiesces in Colonel Duane's wedding."

"Of course, sir.—You do acquiesce in

my wedding, don't you, madam?" added Colonel Duane, turning to Isabel.

"Certainly," replied Isabel, smiling.

"That is well! Then we will have the ceremony right here and now!"

"Oh!" cried Sarah, "I cannot, I cannot!"

"Did you not promise me, madam," asked the Colonel of her, "that I should find a bride at the top of the hill?"

"Yes, but I didn't dream that you would want to claim her now."

"I have waited for six weeks in that camp for this very moment, madam, and I intend to have my way. Besides——"

"Nonsense, Sarah!" interrupted the Judge; "why do you interpose? I see no reason for delay at all. I agree with Sir Francis entirely."

"Do you, then, sir, consent to this marriage?" asked Sarah, meaningly.

"Consent? Is the woman mad? I

urge it! I command it! I insist upon it! 'Tis the cherished dream of my life!"

"Very well, sir," said Sarah, gravely, "with such sanction I am ready."

She placed her hand in that of the Colonel.

"Sarah!" cried the Judge, "are you mad? 'Tis Isabel!"

"Mr. Justice," calmly interrupted the Colonel, "would you have me marry a married woman in the presence of her husband?"

"A married woman! Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Madam Curtis Baird," said the American officer, stepping forward in his turn, "who presumes to ask a father's blessing."

The Judge fairly frothed at the mouth.

"Madam Baird?" he cried. "When—how——"

"The day we escaped, sir, here at Overbrook."

"And who has dared——"

"I, sir," replied Dr. Forsyth, who had entered the room a short time before. "I took great pleasure in uniting two loyal American hearts. Allow me to offer you a pinch of snuff; you seem disturbed."

"This is infamous!" roared the Judge. "Sir Francis, why did you allow it?"

"It is a little late in the day for me to interfere, Judge," said Sir Francis, smiling; "and, besides, I loved Sarah. I loved her the first time I saw her, all the time, in fact, and she has consented to marry me."

"By Heaven!" said the Judge, "I withdraw my consent! I will leave all I have to an orphan asylum. I refuse to be present at such a sacrilegious wedding!"

"Why, we expect you to give away the bride," added the Colonel, still smiling.

"I won't do it!"

22

SARAH CLAIMS HER PRISONER

PERHAPS you will allow me that privilege, then," a deep voice exclaimed, as a rather stout man in the uniform of an American general entered the room, and, pushing through the soldiers, stopped, facing the Colonel. He was followed by another officer. "I should like to render some service to Miss Sarah. She once did me a good turn," he added.

"General Greene, by Heaven!" ex-

claimed Sir Francis. "You here? And this gentleman——"

"Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Lee, at your service."

"This looks not like a nuptial," cried the Englishman. "What do you here, gentlemen?"

"We came to assist at the wedding," answered the General, genially.

The Colonel stepped forward and drew his pistol.

"General Greene, you are my prisoner! Form up, men! Handle your pieces!" he cried to his soldiers.

The General merely smiled. Lee raised his hand to his lips and blew a whistle. Instantly the court-yard was filled with the green-uniformed men of his Legion.

"Fall back, Colonel Duane!" cried Greene. "You are overpowered; the whole American army is here! The enclosure is surrounded by soldiers who out-

number yours five to one. We have four pieces of artillery and the stockade is filled with infantry of the Legion. Colonel Washington is in possession of your camp. Resistance is useless."

"Is this a ruse, sir?" cried Duane.

"I pledge you my word of honor, sir, that the facts are as I stated. Yield you, sir; to struggle now would be folly."

"I surrender," answered Sir Francis, calmly, after a momentary reflection. "Miss Sarah, may I ask you if you were aware of this situation?"

"Your words insult me, sir," she replied, with spirit. "We have stood hand in hand upon the threshold of marriage, and you can hurt me by such a question!"

"You interfered in one love-affair," said the Colonel; "how do I know that——"

"How dare you——"

"Let me compose the quarrel," said General Greene. "The information was

brought by a sergeant. He should be here now."

"Here I am, sir!" cried Dade, saluting and smiling at his Captain.

"Forgive me, Sarah!" cried Sir Francis. "But to see the cup of happiness snatched from my lips as I was about to quaff it; to lose you after this long wait; to have to give you up now—I release you—I am a prisoner.—Take me away, sir!" he said, turning to the General and offering his sword. But Sarah fled to his side.

"General Greene," she cried, "he is my prisoner; he surrendered to me!"

"And I would be very far from robbing you of your prisoner, Miss Sarah," said the General, smiling. "If he will give me his parole not to attempt to escape from your custody and not to bear arms against the United States, he may go free."

"I will give it for him," answered Sarah, promptly.

"He is my prisoner"

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"Nay," replied the General, "that is scarcely enough. He must——"

"Miss Burton speaks for me, General. Whatever she says, I do. I presume that is all?"

"There is something else to attend to," said Sarah, softly, looking at him.

"What else?"

"The wedding," she answered, blushing.

"Will you still marry me?"

"I am ready," she replied.

"General Greene," said Judge Burton, "you will not allow——"

"Pardon me, Mr. Justice," answered the American General; "I have agreed to give away the bride. I cannot go back on my own word. Cornet Hale," he said to the young man, who was contemplating Sarah with rueful countenance, "will be the best man. Madam Isabel will waive her wifehood for a moment and be the maid of

honor. The clergyman stands yonder, so there is a wedding-party complete."

When the service was over, taking his prisoners, among whom the still infuriated Judge was numbered, General Greene withdrew from the hall. Baird and Isabel and Sarah and Duane were left alone.

"You can bear me no malice now, Duane," said Baird, walking over to him and extending his hand.

"None whatever," answered Duane, smiling, as he met the other's grasp. "You have—if Madam Baird will permit me—made me the happiest of men."

"We are brothers now, then," answered the American, "if not in arms, at least in affection.—Come, Isabel," he said, turning away, "let us leave them together."

"Sarah," cried Isabel, as she went up the stairs, "you are a born match-maker—you and Sergeant Dade. You have made all of us happy," she added as she disappeared.

"Are you happy, Sir Francis?" Sarah asked, coming over to him, slipping her arm about his neck, and laying her head upon his shoulder; "are you happy?"

"So happy, my own, as I never dreamed or hoped to be!"

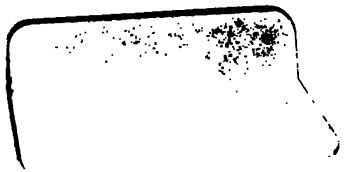
"Are you perfectly satisfied with me?"

"Satisfied, my dearest, is a word which means nothing. I am so humbly filled with joy that I cannot express it."

"Even though you are a prisoner?"

"I would rather be your prisoner than have the freedom of the rest of the world!"

"And you do not regret"—it was the old mocking voice again—"the broad acres——"

"I have all the broad acres I want in your heart!" he replied.

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